

## CHAPTER 5

### **DISTRICT MANAGEMENT OF EISENHOWER-ASSISTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

This chapter explores how districts manage and operate Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. It also examines how key management, planning and implementation provisions of the Eisenhower legislation are associated with the quality of professional development activities, as defined by their structural and core features. The previous chapter described the tremendous variation across districts in their portfolios of Eisenhower-assisted activities—especially in their emphasis on traditional vs. reform methods of professional development, the duration of their activities, and the extent of collective participation and active learning opportunities of these activities. We also examined how districts select and target teachers to participate in Eisenhower-assisted activities. These features of district portfolios of Eisenhower-assisted activities are, in part, the cumulative result of districts’ operation of Eisenhower-assisted activities.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, contains a number of provisions about how districts *should* manage and operate Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. First, several provisions of the law stipulate that Eisenhower funds should be an integral part of state and district strategies to transform education. The ESEA states that districts must use their Eisenhower funds to support professional development activities that are aligned with challenging state and local content and performance standards. Furthermore, the ESEA requires that district Eisenhower-assisted activities be coordinated with other sources of funding for professional development activities, as appropriate.

Second, a group of provisions in the legislation sets forth procedures that districts are to follow in order to achieve its ultimate goals of improved teacher practice and student performance. The ESEA incorporates the federal government’s emphasis on program performance and results. These procedures are grounded in a “continuous improvement” paradigm that has permeated all federal programs in recent years, spurred by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). GPRA requires a process of strategic planning for federal agencies that includes developing goals and measurable objectives, describing how they would be achieved, and using evaluation data to track progress toward these objectives. Similarly, the ESEA requires that states and districts assess their progress in meeting Title II performance indicators.

A third set of requirements in the legislation focuses on planning Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. Districts are required to work with teachers and other school-level staff in planning professional development activities. The law especially emphasizes involving staff in Title I schools in planning Eisenhower-assisted activities.

The common underpinning of all of these legislative provisions is the assumption that they will improve the quality of professional development offered by school districts. By including requirements about the operation of district programs, the legislation attempts to specify practices that presumably will contribute to high-quality professional development.

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In giving districts a prominent role in operating and managing Eisenhower-assisted activities, the legislation is consistent with recent literature on school reform, which also emphasizes the critical role of school districts in setting the context for professional development activities (Elmore, 1996; Knapp et al., 1991; Spillane, 1996; Spillane & Jennings, 1997). However, very little is known about how districts plan or operate professional development activities, or about which district strategies for fostering high-quality professional development activities are effective. Much of the professional development literature focuses on the optimal characteristics of individual professional development activities, and not on district strategies for professional development.

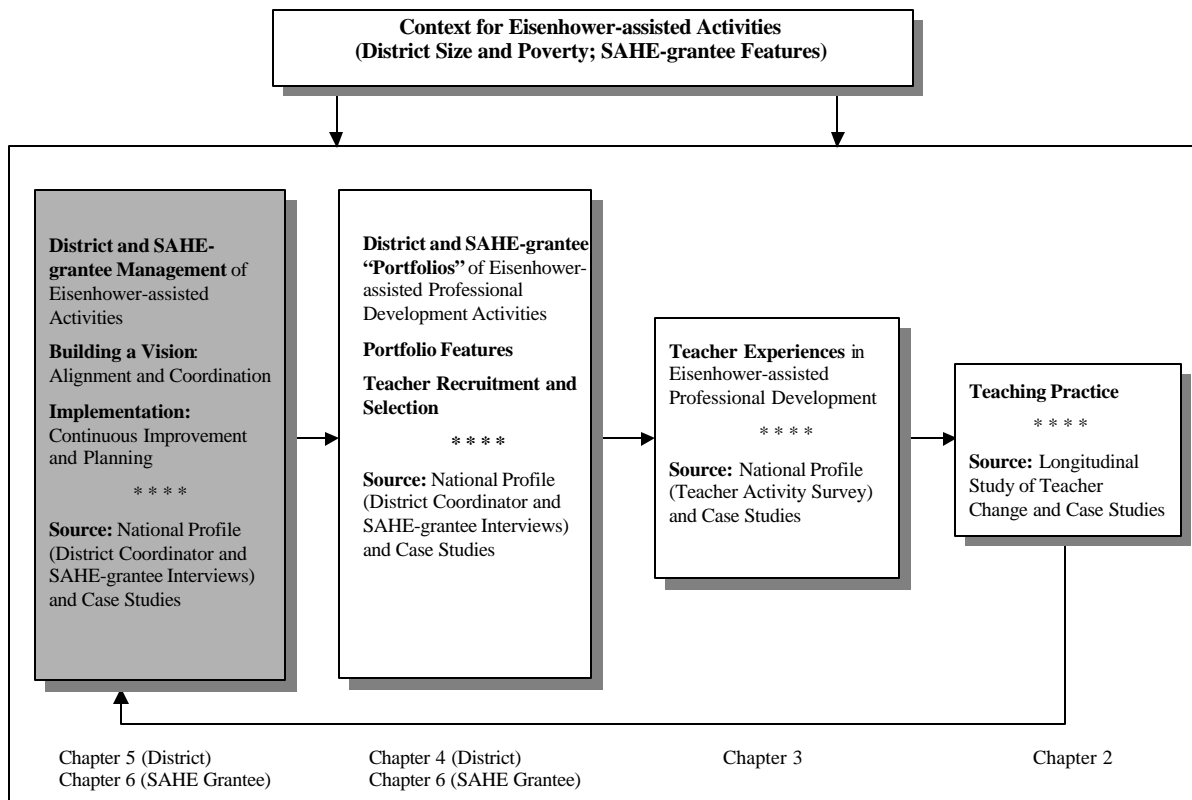
Recent research focuses on the importance of school-based professional development that is embedded in the daily life of teachers (Corcoran, 1995; U.S. Department of Education, 1999a; Little, 1982; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998). Yet, even when professional development occurs at the school, districts can play a central role in its planning and implementation. They also play a role in building a vision of school reform and shaping professional development to support reform efforts (Elmore & Burney, 1996). Districts, for example, may play a key role in conveying to administrators, teachers, and providers of professional development the implications of state and local standards and assessments for professional development activities, and how various sources of funding could be used to support these activities. Districts also may play a role in providing technical support to schools in tracking progress toward achieving professional development goals. Certainly districts can guide the use of Eisenhower funds toward school-based programs that are coherent (i.e., consistent with teachers' goals, aligned with state standards and assessments, and encouraging of continuing professional communication among teachers), a key attribute of quality identified in Chapter 3.

In the present chapter, we take a more in-depth look at the district's role in shaping Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. Specifically, we examine how districts address the alignment and coordination of the Eisenhower Professional Development Program with other programs; how districts implement "continuous improvement" based on indicators, needs assessments, evaluation, and guidance to schools and providers of professional development; and how districts involve teachers and other school staff in planning professional development efforts. Finally, we examine how all of these efforts are associated with the quality of Eisenhower-assisted professional development in the district. Exhibit 5.0 illustrates this chapter's focus on these key aspects of the districts' operation of Eisenhower-activities in the context of the entire study.

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## EXHIBIT 5.0

### Conceptual Framework for This Evaluation



## Data Sources

The results presented in this chapter are based on data from our national survey of district Eisenhower coordinators as well as data from case studies of districts across the country. We conducted telephone interviews in the spring of 1998 with a national random sample of district Eisenhower coordinators. Through a process of stratified random sampling, selected to allow variation on size and poverty level, we targeted a total of 400 districts across the country. We obtained survey data from a sample of 363 district Eisenhower coordinators, yielding a response rate of 88 percent. During the telephone interviews, coordinators reported on specific professional development activities that occurred from July 1997 through December 1997; questions about general practices applied to the 1997-1998 school year. The probability of a district being chosen for our sample was proportional to district size (i.e., the number of teachers in the district). As a result, all of the data are weighted by district size. Therefore, our findings provide information according to the percent of teachers in a district.

Our case study information is drawn from two sources. One source is a series of 10 in-depth case studies that we conducted during the 1997-1998 school year. The 10 case study districts are a purposefully drawn sample of districts, two from each of five states. We selected sites to obtain variation on state-level reform efforts and the districts' approach to professional development, as well as demographic and geographic characteristics. We also draw on six exploratory case study districts that we visited at the end of the 1996-1997 school year; we selected these districts primarily

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for diversity of region, urbanicity, and ethnic composition. Appendix A contains detailed information about our methodology for sampling the National Profile, and Appendix B contains detailed information about our methodology for selecting case studies.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Organization of Chapter

This chapter is organized in six sections. The first three sections are organized according to the three main areas around which district roles revolve: 1) building a vision for education reform by aligning professional development with standards and assessments and coordinating with other programs; 2) implementing the vision for professional development through continuous improvement based on the use of objective data (through use of indicators, needs assessments and evaluations of Eisenhower-assisted activities), and the provision of guidance to schools and professional development providers; and 3) involving teachers in planning for professional development.

Throughout these three sections, for key management and implementation variables, we analyze and report whether there are statistically significant differences according to district poverty level or the number of teachers in the district (i.e., district size). For these analyses, poverty is divided into three levels—low (less than 10.9 percent of children in poverty), medium (10.9 to 21.4 percent of children in poverty) and high (greater than 21.4 percent of children in poverty).<sup>3</sup> District size is divided into four types—small (less than 250 teachers), medium (between 250 and 1500 teachers), large (more than 1500 teachers), and consortia. A consortium is a group of districts, which can range in size from only a couple of districts to several hundred districts. To identify consortia, we asked each district that we sampled whether or not the district participated in the Eisenhower Professional Development Program through a consortium. If the district did participate through a consortium, we then drew the entire consortium into our sample, and adjusted the probability of each of the consortia being selected into the sample, based on the full set of districts that belonged to the consortium.

The size and poverty effects are each estimated where the other is held constant, so significant results for one dimension are independent of the other dimension. Interaction effects between size and poverty are not statistically significant unless otherwise noted. The fourth section of this chapter provides a summary and discussion of how districts vary in alignment, coordination, continuous improvement, and planning according to the district's poverty level and size.

The fifth section of the chapter presents a model, based on our national data from district Eisenhower coordinators, of how district management and implementation practices influence the structural and core features of Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. The sixth

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<sup>1</sup> The Study of Educational Resources and Federal Funding (SERFF) collected data on co-funding of Eisenhower activities and several other issues concerning the resources used for professional development in school districts. (See Chambers, Lieberman, Parrish, Kaleba, Van Campen, and Stullich, 1999.) In general, SERFF results are consistent with those reported here. Differences in results and those reported in the SERFF are primarily due to cross-study differences in data-weighting procedures, the wording of the items, or the presentation of conditional vs. unconditional results. (For example, the data on co-funding of Eisenhower-assisted activities from this evaluation of the Eisenhower program is based on districts where the program operates, while the SERFF results are based on all districts.) When these differences are taken into account, the results of the two studies are quite consistent.

<sup>2</sup> Results for some analyses reported in this chapter were reported earlier in U.S. Department of Education (1999b). The earlier results differ from results in this report because they were preliminary, unweighted, and did not include the full sample of teachers and districts. Results are considered to be statistically significant if the p-value is .05 or smaller.

<sup>3</sup> These categories divide the population equally into thirds.

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and final section summarizes our major findings and discusses implications for both federal and district policy.

## **BUILDING A VISION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS, AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS**

### **Section Findings**

- ◆ *Most of the nation's teachers are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report substantial alignment of Eisenhower-assisted activities with state and district standards, and to a lesser extent, with state and district assessments.*
- ◆ *Many of the nation's teachers are in districts where coordinators report that other district staff, in addition to the Eisenhower coordinator, are involved in planning Eisenhower-assisted activities, and that district Eisenhower coordinators work together with other district-level program administrators, especially mathematics and science curriculum specialists.*
- ◆ *There is more coordination of the Eisenhower program with other mathematics and science-oriented initiatives, in comparison with initiatives that do not focus on these subjects. In districts where other federal programs operate, most teachers are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report working with administrators of other federal education programs, especially those funded by NSF. Eisenhower coordinators to a lesser extent report working with administrators of ED-funded programs, such as Title I, Part A.*
- ◆ *Across all programs, districts are substantially less likely to report co-funding activities than working with other staff; co-funding of activities is more common with NSF-funded activities than with those funded by ED programs. However, we have no national data regarding the actual proportion of Eisenhower-assisted activities or participations that are co-funded with other programs.*
- ◆ *There is more coordination in larger and, to some extent, higher-poverty districts, than in other districts.*

The Eisenhower program predates recent moves toward systemic education reform, and it operates as just one of a number of funding streams for professional development in the nation's school districts. In some, generally small districts, Eisenhower funds may exist alongside a few other education programs, such as Title I, Part A; in other, usually large districts, it is one of a panoply of federal, state, and local programs, reform efforts, and professional development initiatives. The provisions of the Eisenhower legislation give prominence to the district's role in integrating Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities into other state and district education reform efforts through alignment with challenging education standards, and coordination with other education programs.

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The Title II legislation reflects the importance of aligning professional development with challenging state and local standards. Specifically, the legislation stipulates that the LEA's plan shall "be aligned with the State's challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards" (Section 2208 (d)(1)(C)) and "describe a strategy, tied to challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards, consistent with the needs assessment under subsection (b)" (Section 2208 (d)(1)(D)). Title I of ESEA requires that by the 1997-98 school year, each state was to have adopted challenging content standards, in at least reading and mathematics, and challenging performance standards that describe students' mastery of the content standards. Forty-eight states, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, have met federal requirements for developing challenging statewide content standards. Twenty-one states, plus Puerto Rico, have met the requirement for developing student performance standards (U.S. Department of Education, 1999b).

Aligning professional development with standards and assessments can be one way that districts work to send a common message to teachers about appropriate instruction (Webb, 1998). Lessons from systemic reform indicate that fragmentation within the system decreases motivation for working on reform (Fullan, 1993, 1996), and that success is in part contingent upon establishing long-term goals and being able to articulate a new vision (Cohen & Spillane, 1992). When policies and reforms are unaligned, teachers notice the inconsistency (Grant, Peterson, & Shojgreen-Downer, 1996); alternatively, when policies and reforms are aligned, this can work to encourage changes in instruction (Spillane & Jennings, 1997).

In the literature, there is little evidence that districts generally provide a common vision that would guide the use of professional development funds from a variety of sources, or link professional development to other education reform efforts. In addition, research indicates that districts generally are unaccustomed to planning portfolios of professional development activities strategically to achieve instructional goals or other types of goals and objectives (Elmore, 1993). Furthermore, professional development generally does not appear to be embedded in the daily activities of schools and teachers. Rather, "most school systems see professional development as a discrete activity... or service that is provided to schools as one of a number of centrally organized administrative functions" (Elmore & Burney, 1996, p. 23).

The consequence typically is a menu of discrete professional development activities, usually focused on specific content areas or pressing issues in the daily conduct of schooling, such as school discipline. As a result, activities are often organized and delivered centrally so that school personnel participate in training that is designed and conducted in isolation from their work setting (Elmore & Burney, 1996).

In their seminal case study of professional development in New York City's Community School District 2, Elmore and Burney (1996) emphasize the critical importance of establishing a focus for guiding professional development activities in the district. They describe a district that systematically identified instructional goals and objectives and designed a strategy for professional development to address directly these goals and objectives. The district's emphasis on instructional improvement focused its professional development activities. They view this district as an "existence proof" that districts can "be agents of serious instructional improvement," and that districts can use professional development as a tool for the reform of schools. Other researchers also have emphasized the importance of establishing a district vision for professional development (Spillane, 1996) and the important role of standards and assessments in shaping professional development activities (Cohen & Hill, 1998).

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Besides alignment, another way for districts to focus professional development activities is by coordinating multiple sources of funding for professional development activities. The ESEA supports the idea of coordinating funding streams. The legislation indicates that Eisenhower funds should not be spent in isolation from other program funds, but instead Eisenhower-assisted activities should be planned and coordinated with other sources of funding for professional development. In addition, the law requires that state and local plans describe how Eisenhower-assisted activities are coordinated with other Education Department (ED) programs (such as Title I, Part A of ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)), as well as with professional development efforts supported with funds they receive from other federal agencies (such as the National Science Foundation ) (Section 2205(c) and Section 2208(d)(1)(H)).

Districts often must balance many sources of funding for professional development. When districts have established a focus for their professional development, they may deploy these multiple sources of funding toward the same ends. Leveraging resources can have a role in affecting the quality of professional development (Corcoran, 1995). For example, Elmore and Burney (1996) describe the “multi-pocket budgeting” that occurred in District 2, where the district administration used funding from multiple sources to fund its coherent professional development strategy.

In this section of the chapter, we use our district coordinator survey data to examine the extent to which districts integrate Eisenhower-assisted activities with other education reform efforts, which we measure by the districts’ reported degree of alignment and coordination. We first describe the extent to which the district coordinators report linking professional development activities to state and district standards and assessments. We then examine the level of coordination between Eisenhower-funded activities and other programs. Coordination is measured by the extent of collaboration with others in professional development roles and with other federal programs, and by the extent to which districts use funding streams in a strategic way by combining funding sources. Taken together, these aspects of alignment and coordination can be thought of as an indication of the extent to which the district is providing a coherent vision for professional development.

## **Alignment of Eisenhower-assisted Activities with State and District Standards and Assessments**

“Alignment” is a difficult concept to define and measure. Ideally, all aspects of an educational system are aligned with each other to support student learning to high standards. This might mean that textbooks, other materials, and instructional approaches that teachers use match state and local standards and assessments, that the professional development teachers receive helps them to use those materials and approaches appropriately, and that only what is valued is included in the curriculum or in assessments.

Evidence of alignment can be sought in many places. Webb (1998) notes that one could look for alignment in the consistency of content focus between professional development activities and standards and assessments; the extent to which professional development activities and standards and assessments are rooted in a common view of how students learn; and the extent to which professional development and standards and assessments reflect the view that all students must learn to high standards, which indicates attention to the learning needs of diverse students.

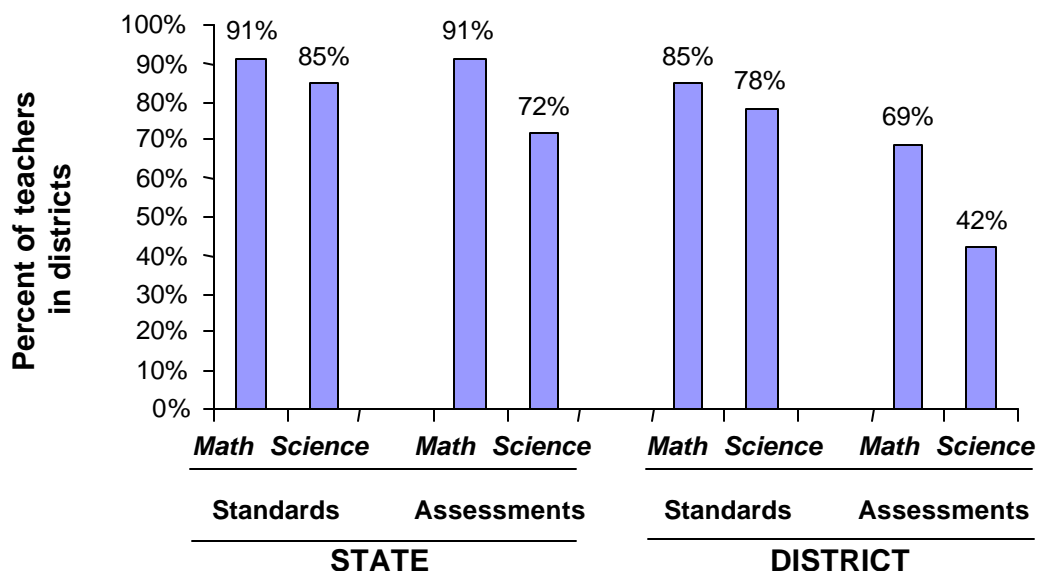
To measure how well districts are doing in meeting the legislative requirements in this area, we asked district Eisenhower coordinators participating in our national survey about the existence of state and local standards and assessments in mathematics and science, and the extent to which

Eisenhower-assisted activities are intended to support those standards and assessments. Specifically, we asked district Eisenhower coordinators whether statewide or district-wide standards or curriculum frameworks, or assessments, in mathematics or science, have been adopted. We then asked them to what extent the Eisenhower-assisted activities in their district were designed to help teachers adapt their teaching to meet the particular standards or assessments. Response categories were: 1) the activities are not at all designed to help teachers adapt their teaching to these standards or assessments, 2) the activities are designed to some extent to do this, or 3) the activities are designed to a large extent to do this.

As Exhibit 5.1a shows, Eisenhower coordinators indicate that their states typically have standards and assessments in mathematics and science. Ninety-one percent of teachers are in states with mathematics standards, and 85 percent of teachers are in states with science standards, according to district Eisenhower coordinators.

### EXHIBIT 5.1a

#### Percent of Teachers in Districts Where State and District Mathematics and Science Standards and Assessments Exist (n= 363)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that 91 percent of teachers are in districts that have state mathematics standards. Each bar and the number on top of it represent the percent of teachers in districts for each category.

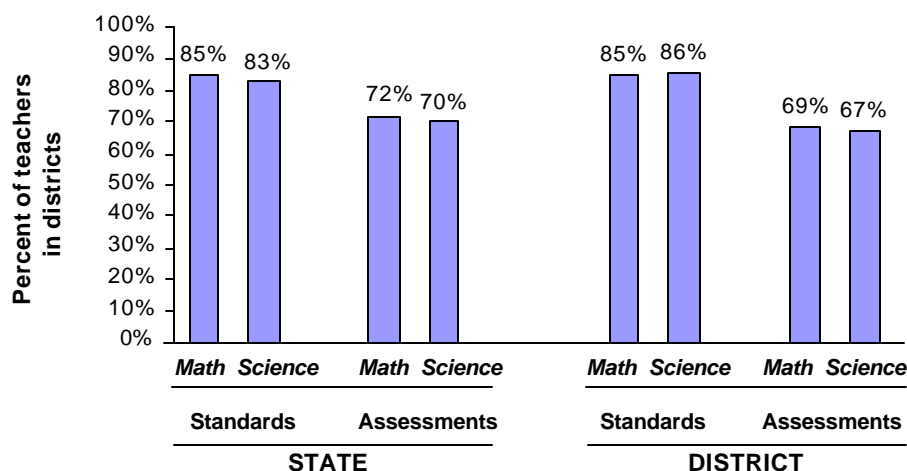
In addition, Exhibit 5.1a shows that most Eisenhower coordinators also report the existence of state assessments, though slightly less frequently for science; 91 percent of teachers are in districts that report having state-level mathematics assessments, while only 72 percent of teachers are in districts that say they have statewide science assessments. Districts have their own mathematics and science standards somewhat less frequently than states in which they are located. Eighty-five percent of teachers are in districts that report that they have district standards in mathematics, and 78 percent are in districts that have district science standards. Further, districts are considerably less likely to

have local-level assessments, particularly in science; 69 percent of teachers are in districts that have district assessments in mathematics, and 42 percent of teachers are in districts that have district assessments in science.

Exhibit 5.1b shows that, of the districts that report that they have state and/or district standards, 83 to 86 percent of teachers are in districts that say that Eisenhower-assisted activities in mathematics and science are designed to support these standards “to a large extent.” Fewer coordinators report such support for assessments; only 67 to 72 percent of teachers are in districts where Eisenhower activities in mathematics and science support state and local assessments “to a large extent.” However, the vast majority of teachers (94 percent or more) are in districts where Eisenhower-assisted activities support state and local assessments either “to some extent” or “to a large extent” (data not shown).

### EXHIBIT 5.1b

#### Percent of Teachers in Districts Where Eisenhower-assisted Activities Are Aligned “to a Large Extent” with State and/or District Standards and/or Assessments (Where Such Standards and Assessments Exist) (n varies)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that of the teachers in districts with state mathematics standards, 85 percent of teachers are in districts reporting that their Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities are designed “to a large extent” to help teachers adapt to the state mathematics standards. Each bar and the number on top of it represent the percent of teachers in districts for each category.

There are a number of reasons that Eisenhower activities may be less aligned with assessments than with standards. First, the assessments themselves may not yet be appropriately aligned to the standards. This may be true, in part, because the ESEA requirement for assessments to be aligned with standards had not yet gone into effect at the time that we collected our data.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, developing assessments, especially those that are aligned with high standards, has proven to be harder than developing the standards themselves.

<sup>4</sup> While Title I of ESEA required that each state adopt challenging content and performance standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics by the 1997-98 school year, final assessment systems are not required to be in place until 2000-2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 1999c).

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Our data also show that where district standards exist, Eisenhower activities are as likely to be aligned with than as with state standards; similarly, where district assessments exist, Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities are equally likely to be aligned with state and district assessments. This is probably because states generally have more responsibility than districts for establishing and implementing standards; in addition, district standards often mirror state standards.

To determine whether the degree of alignment between Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities and standards and assessments differs according to district poverty or district size,<sup>5</sup> we developed a composite measure of alignment. It is a standardized scale, for which five indicates that district coordinators report professional development activities to be aligned “to a large extent” with both state and district standards and assessments, and zero indicates that district coordinators report not being aligned with standards or assessments at either level. The value of the scale for each district is based on the degree to which the district reports being aligned with whatever state and district standards and assessments exist in the district. As Exhibit 5.1c indicates, Eisenhower-assisted activities in large districts are significantly more likely to be aligned with state and district standards and assessments than Eisenhower-assisted activities in small districts. This may be because large districts have a more developed and sophisticated method for integrating state and district reforms with professional development activities. Previous research has shown that administrators often believe that they need more information on how to link professional development with standards (Celebuski & Farris, 1998), and this lack of information may be more prevalent in small than large districts. It also may be that districts with more teachers have more of a need to create an organized strategy for the design of their professional development activities, and thus are more likely than smaller districts to use state and district standards and assessments for this purpose. Poverty-level differences in alignment are not significant.

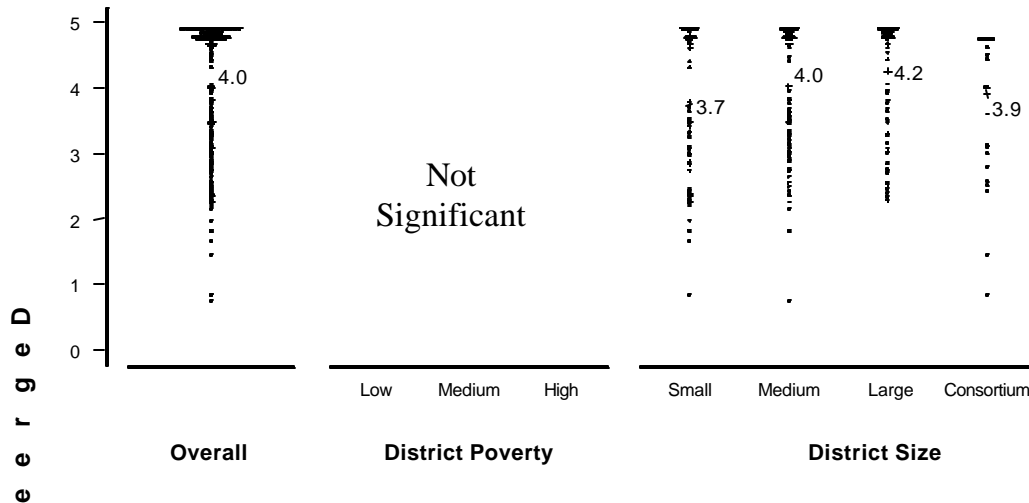
Case studies help to explain just how important state and local standards and assessments can be in shaping Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. For example, in our two case districts in Texas, Eisenhower coordinators and other district administrators frequently referred to the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), the statewide assessment, as a critical determinant of the content of professional development. Indeed, in one of the two districts, administrators told us that everything they do is guided by TAAS. They report that professional development activities are geared to areas of the TAAS on which the district has identified a need for improvement. To a lesser extent, district administrators indicate that the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the state’s new content standards, also are an important determinant of professional development. Texas illustrates that while, on average, standards are more influential than assessments, this is not always the case. In Texas, state assessment results are used for important accountability purposes, and this probably explains their greater-than-average influence.

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<sup>5</sup> As we noted earlier, district poverty and district size are always estimated together in the same model, so any significant effects for size control for poverty, and likewise any significant effects for poverty control for size.

## EXHIBIT 5.1c

### Degree of Alignment Between Eisenhower-assisted Activities and Standards and Assessments, Overall and by District Poverty and District Size (n=363)



Significant Pairwise Contrasts	
Size	Small vs. Large

**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first distribution shows that on average, teachers are in districts that have an average alignment of 4.0 on a scale from zero to five, where zero indicates no alignment and five indicates being aligned “to a large extent” with state and district standards and assessments. The degree of alignment differs significantly by district size, but not by district poverty level. Each dot represents one district. As the number districts at one data point (or value) increases, the dots form a horizontal line that increases in length. Each distribution represents the distribution for that particular category. The number to the right of the distribution is the mean.

Our two case districts in Kentucky place a similar emphasis on providing professional development aligned with the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS), the state student assessment program used in their school accountability program. In both districts, this alignment takes the form of the district or schools selecting professional development activities designed to address areas of low performance on KIRIS. District administrators in both the Texas and the Kentucky districts repeatedly refer to their statewide assessments systems as important factors in all decisions made about professional development.

Despite the central role that state assessments often play in the design of professional development, this type of alignment does not necessarily contribute to a consistent approach to professional development. For example, one Kentucky district selects professional development activities in response to areas of weak performance by students on the previous year's state assessments. Thus, plans for professional development could change on an annual basis. During our site visit, we were told that all professional development activities would shift from mathematics to science, in response to that year's test scores. To the extent that areas of weakness in student achievement change from year to year, which is not unusual according to district officials, this approach may not support the kind of sustained professional development efforts envisioned by the Eisenhower legislation.

Both our quantitative and qualitative data illustrate the emphasis that many districts place on aligning professional development activities with state and district standards and assessments.

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However, neither the survey nor the case study data allow us to evaluate all of the facets of alignment discussed by Webb (1998). For example, we did not observe professional development activities. Direct observation which would have enabled us to determine whether the content of these activities reflects the depth of content knowledge demanded by high standards for student performance.

One way that some districts align their professional development with state standards is to make the process of achieving such alignment a professional development activity. Several districts that we visited use Eisenhower funds to support a review of district curricula to ensure that they are aligned with state standards. At least three case-study districts, one each in Washington, Texas, and New York, use Eisenhower funds in this way. In these districts, groups of teachers, typically volunteers, meet over an extended period of time to review state standards and current district curricula to identify areas of alignment and areas in which alignment should be improved. In all three districts, this process is ongoing. Clearly, this type of professional development activity is aligned to state standards in the sense that it requires teachers to be well informed about what the state standards are and how they might translate into local curricula.

## **Coordination with Other Programs**

Alignment is one measure of how Eisenhower professional development activities fit into districts' reform efforts. The extent to which districts work with and co-fund activities with other programs is another important measure of the integration of reform efforts in the district. Eisenhower funds support professional development activities, but so do funds from other sources—local, state, and federal. Eisenhower-assisted activities can be integrated with professional development activities funded by other sources, they can operate in isolation from these other sources, or they can operate independently but be part of a larger professional development plan. Coordination between Eisenhower coordinators and coordinators of other federal and district programs, and co-funding activities with those of other programs, can signal district attempts to build a coherent vision of professional development, or to establish a focus for potentially disparate professional development activities.

Because the relationship between Eisenhower-assisted activities and professional development activities funded through other sources conceivably can take many different forms, working relationships between the staff of the different programs may govern the relationships between programs. Thus, this section examines the extent to which Eisenhower coordinators work with others in their districts, and the extent to which Eisenhower-assisted activities are co-funded with activities funded by other federal programs.

### **Eisenhower Coordinators' Relationships with Others within the District Office**

We asked district Eisenhower coordinators to answer questions regarding the structure of their district office, specifically to identify the positions present in their district, to identify which roles they play in their districts, and to indicate whether they work with people in other positions in making decisions about the Eisenhower program. As Exhibit 5.2 illustrates, district Eisenhower coordinators report that they do not work in isolation. Rather, they report working with other district administrators and with coordinators of other federal programs to make decisions about Eisenhower-assisted activities.

## EXHIBIT 5.2

### Percent of Teachers in Districts According to Eisenhower Coordinator's Roles within the District Office (n=363)

Position within District Office	Percent of teachers in districts that have the position	In districts with the position, percent of teachers in districts where the Eisenhower Coordinator fills position	In districts where the position is not filled by the Eisenhower Coordinator, percent of teachers in districts where the person in the position participates in Eisenhower decision making
General Curriculum/ Instruction Coordinator	80	48	90
Mathematics Coordinator	58	46	96
Science Coordinator	57	47	97
Professional Development Coordinator	69	39	81
Special Education Coordinator	91	8	62
Title I Coordinator	87	25	78
Federal Programs Coordinator	59	43	83

**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first row shows that 80 percent of teachers are in districts that have a general curriculum or instruction coordinator; in districts with this position, nearly half of the teachers (48 percent) are in districts where the Eisenhower Coordinator fills the position; and when someone else fills the position, 90 percent of teachers are in districts where the general curriculum or instruction coordinator participates in Eisenhower decisions.

**Note:** There may be overlap in the positions filled by Eisenhower coordinators or positions filled by other individuals. For instance, an Eisenhower coordinator may be the district's curriculum coordinator and the district's mathematics and science coordinator. Similarly, any other individual who works closely with the Eisenhower coordinator may serve in multiple roles, for instance, as the Title I coordinator and the federal programs coordinator.

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Exhibit 5.2 reflects several findings related to the nature of coordination. First, it shows that Eisenhower coordinators often serve in multiple roles. Among teachers in districts that have a curriculum coordinator, mathematics coordinator, or science coordinator position, close to half are in districts in which the Eisenhower coordinator fills these positions (48, 46, and 47 percent of teachers in districts, respectively). And among teachers in districts with a Federal Program Coordinator, 43 percent are in districts in which the Eisenhower coordinator fills the position. On average, Eisenhower coordinators report spending 23 percent of their time administering the Eisenhower program, and, though some work full-time on Eisenhower, three-quarters spend 27 percent or less of their time on Eisenhower (results not shown). The fact that Eisenhower coordinators serve in multiple roles suggests a certain amount of integration between Eisenhower-assisted efforts and other district efforts.

Second, Exhibit 5.2 suggests that when Eisenhower coordinators do not fill multiple roles, they report working closely with other district-level administrators in making decisions about how to use Eisenhower funds. Almost all teachers are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report working closely with mathematics and science curriculum specialists (96 and 97 percent of teachers in districts, respectively). More than 80 percent of teachers are in districts whose Eisenhower coordinator reports working with the general curriculum/instruction coordinator (90 percent), the federal programs coordinator (83 percent), and the professional development coordinator (81 percent). Seventy-eight percent of teachers are in districts whose Eisenhower coordinator says they work with the Title I coordinator. Teachers are least likely to be in districts where the Eisenhower coordinator reports working with special education coordinators (62 percent).

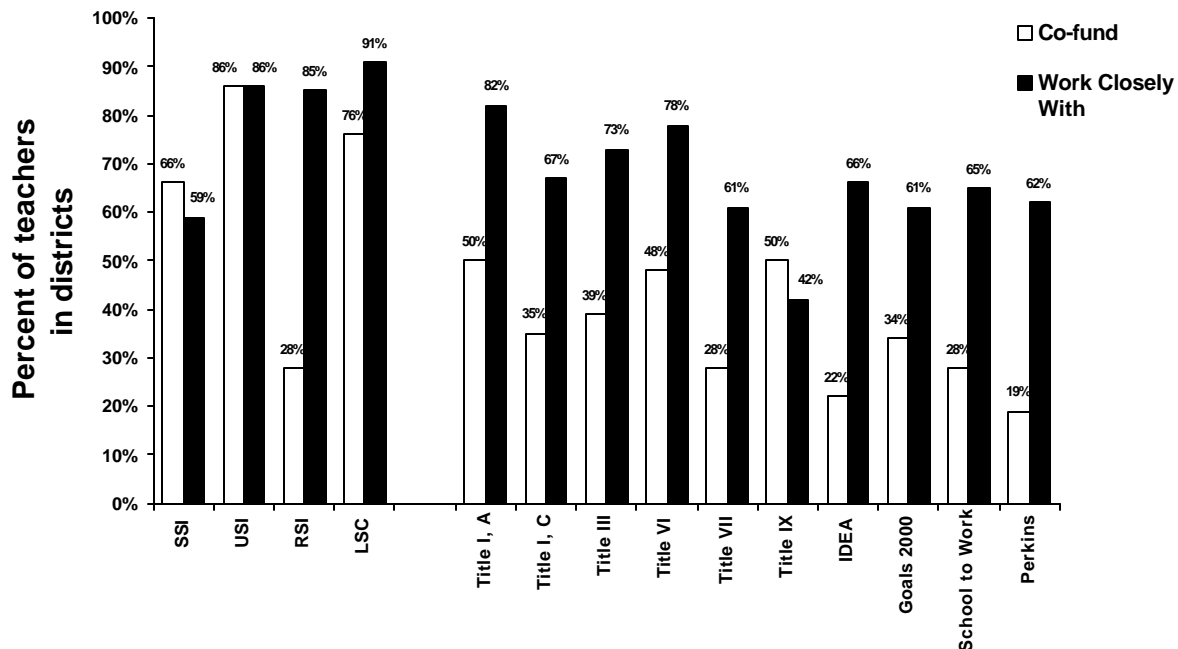
### **Coordination of Eisenhower-assisted Activities with Those of Other Federal Programs**

In addition to reporting that they work closely with others in professional development-related roles, Eisenhower coordinators report that they work closely with the coordinators of federal education programs. We provided district coordinators with a list of NSF and ED programs, and asked them to indicate whether the program operated in their state or district, whether it supported professional development in their district in the last year (1996-1997), whether it co-funded professional development with Eisenhower, and/or if program staff worked closely with Eisenhower program staff.

As Exhibit 5.3a shows, where particular federal programs support professional development in their district, the Eisenhower coordinators report working closely with staff of the other federal programs. Although a relatively small proportion of teachers are in districts that receive funds from NSF programs, Eisenhower coordinators in these districts almost always report that they work closely with the administrators responsible for these programs. Ninety-one percent of teachers are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report working with staff of the Local Systemic Change (LSC) initiative, 86 percent of teachers are in districts that report working with the staff of the Urban Systemic Initiative (USI), and 85 percent of teachers are in districts that report working with the staff of the Rural Systemic Initiative (RSI), in districts where these NSF programs operate. In states with NSF State Systemic Initiatives (SSI), 59 percent of teachers are in districts in which Eisenhower coordinators report working closely with SSI staff.

## EXHIBIT 5.3a

### Percent of Teachers in Districts in which Eisenhower Activities Coordinate (Co-fund and/or Work Closely) with Other Programs (n varies)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that, of teachers in districts with SSIs, 66 percent of teachers are in districts that co-fund with SSIs, and 59 percent of teachers are in districts in which the district Eisenhower coordinator reports working closely with the SSI. Co-funding differs significantly by both district poverty level and district size. Each bar and the number on top of it represent the percent of teachers in districts for each category.

**Note:** Results on co-funding for each listed program are based on districts that participate in the program, and in which the program supports professional development. Results for working closely with each program are based on districts that participate in the program.

In addition, Exhibit 5.3a shows that large proportions of teachers also are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report working closely with coordinators of several federal programs funded by the Education Department. Notably, of teachers in districts with Title I, Part A programs (representing almost all teachers), 82 percent are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report working closely with Title I coordinators. A similar proportion of teachers—78 percent—are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report working closely with the coordinators of Title VI-funded activities. Of the nation's teachers in districts where other ED programs operate, between 60 and 70 percent are in districts that work closely with staff of these ED programs, with the exception of the Title III (73 percent) and Title IX (42 percent) programs.

In fact, Eisenhower coordinators report working with multiple federal education programs, where these programs exist in their districts. Our analyses of these data show that Eisenhower coordinators report that they work closely with coordinators of 65 percent of the other federal programs that operate in their districts (data not shown). In other words, in a typical district with six

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federal programs other than Eisenhower, the Eisenhower coordinator could be expected to work closely with the individual(s) responsible for coordinating about four of those programs.<sup>6</sup>

### **Co-funding with Other Programs**

Co-funding—the contribution of funds from two programs to support the same professional development activity—is another, perhaps stronger indicator of coordination between Eisenhower-assisted activities and other federal programs. In addition to providing information about the other district personnel with whom the Eisenhower coordinator works, Exhibit 5.3a shows the percent of teachers in districts in which Eisenhower activities are co-funded with NSF and ED programs; the exhibit demonstrates that, in districts with a specific program, a substantial proportion of teachers are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report that they co-fund professional development activities with that program.

With only a few exceptions, Eisenhower coordinators are less likely to report co-funding activities with other federal programs than they are to report working closely with those programs. This is clear from Exhibit 5.3a. Exhibit 5.3a also indicates that the Eisenhower program is more likely to co-fund with NSF-funded programs than ED-funded programs. For example, between 66 and 86 percent of teachers are in districts in which Eisenhower coordinators co-fund with three of the four NSF initiatives, whereas the maximum proportion of teachers in districts that co-fund with ED-sponsored programs is 50 percent (for Title I, Part A). One explanation of this pattern is NSF's exclusive focus on mathematics and science; since this also is the predominant focus of Eisenhower-assisted activities, there may be more opportunity for co-funding with NSF activities. Also, NSF has co-funding requirements for many of its programs, which may in part account for the higher levels of co-funding with Eisenhower. Overall, teachers are in districts that report that they co-fund professional development activities with about one-third—34 percent—of the other federal programs that support professional development in their district (results not shown).

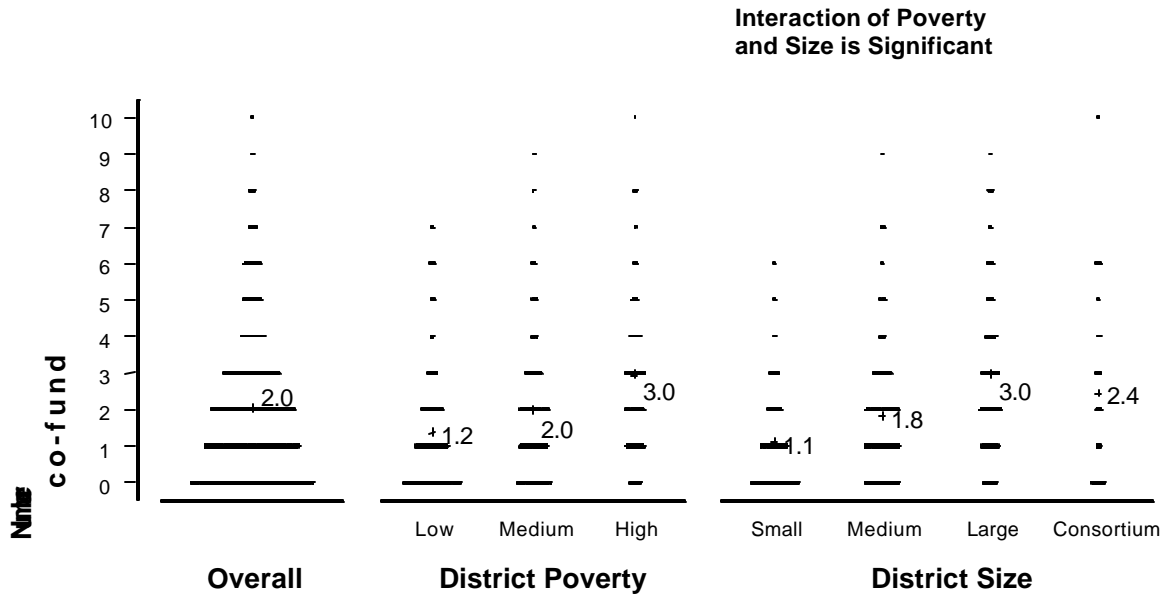
Adding the total number of federal programs that co-fund with Eisenhower, of a possible 10, allows us to form a composite measure of co-funding to test poverty and size effects. The results, shown in Exhibit 5.3b, indicate that on average districts co-fund with two programs, and that district size and poverty interactions significantly affect co-funding. Exhibit 5.3c shows the interactions between district poverty and size for co-funding. Generally, co-funding increases as district size and poverty level increases. The exception is that for consortia, medium-poverty districts co-fund less than low-poverty districts.

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that these are not necessarily four individuals, one coordinating each program, but may be only one or two individuals, each of whom coordinates more than one other program. Similarly, the Eisenhower coordinator him/herself may be responsible for overseeing other Federal programs.

## EXHIBIT 5.3b

### Extent of Co-Funding of Eisenhower–assisted Activities with Those of Other Federal Programs, Overall and by District Poverty and District Size (n=363)



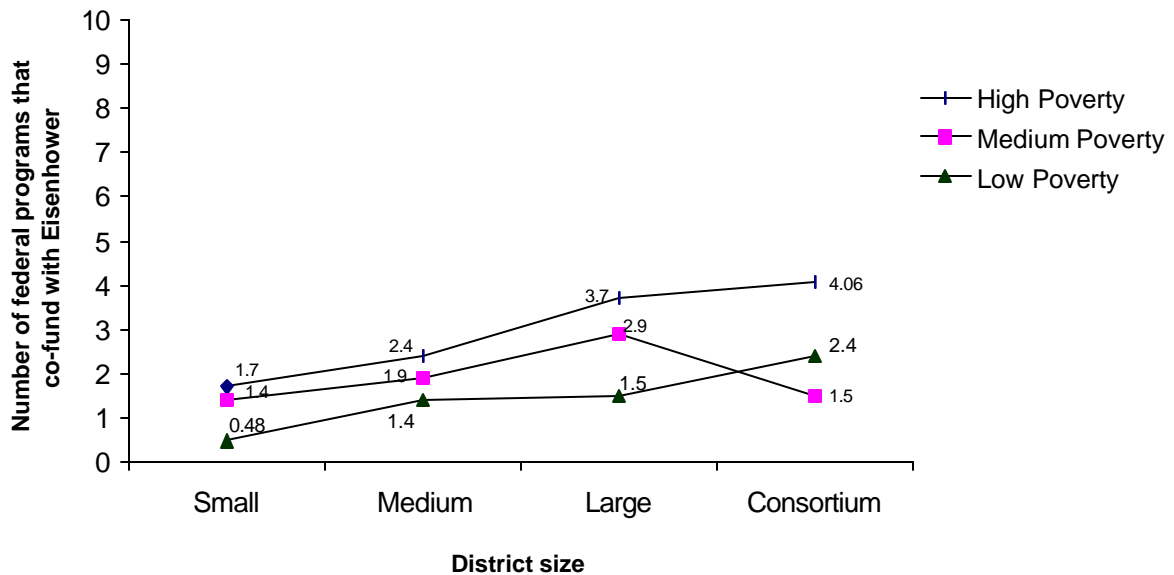
**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first distribution shows that on average, teachers are in districts that co-fund with two federal programs. Each dot represents one district. As the number of districts at one data point (or value) increases, the dots form a horizontal line increases in length. Each distribution represents the distribution for that particular category. The number to the right of the distribution is the mean.

These results might be explained by the fact that high-poverty districts receive more funding that may be used for professional development from federal and some state sources whose formulas target districts with greater needs. The existence of multiple sources of funding with similar programmatic goals may create greater opportunities for coordination. Similarly, large districts and consortia may have funds from multiple sources which increase opportunities for coordination and co-funding. Large districts and consortia are also more likely to have more individuals in professional-development related roles, which may foster collaboration that results in funding activities with a combination of sources.

## EXHIBIT 5.3c

### Extent of Co-funding of Eisenhower-assisted Activities with Those of Other Federal Programs, Interaction of District Poverty and District Size (n=363)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The data point designated by the first square indicates that the average percent of participations in reform activities in medium-poverty small districts is 19 percent. The line with data points designated by diamonds indicates the percent of participations in reform activities for high-poverty districts in each of four sizes/types of districts (i.e., consortia, large, medium, and small districts); the line with data points designated by squares indicates the percent of participations in reform activities for medium-poverty districts for each of the four sizes/types of districts; and the line with data points designated by triangles indicates the percent of participations in reform activities in low poverty districts for each of the four sizes/types of districts.

### Illustrations of Coordination in Case-Study Districts

Although our survey data provide information about the existence of coordination and co-funding, they do not allow us to judge the frequency or quality of the relationships between Eisenhower coordinators and other district administrators. Case data, however, provide information on the nature and depth of coordination and co-funding between Eisenhower coordinators and coordinators of other federally funded programs.

Our case districts provide examples of the close coordination that can occur between Eisenhower-assisted activities and those funded by NSF initiatives. In several of our case districts, Urban Systemic Initiative grants, funded by NSF, greatly expand the funding available for professional development in mathematics and science, according to district administrators. Middle City, Wisconsin, for example, has a particularly varied array of professional development activities in mathematics and science, funded from a variety of sources. Thus, the district uses all of its funding sources together to support the large variety of professional development activities. These activities rely heavily on mathematics and science resource teachers, who serve as mentors for the other teachers in their schools. Professional development funds also support semester-long workshops for

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teachers, opportunities for teachers to immerse themselves in mathematics or science-related industry over the summer, mini-grants to teachers to follow up on what they learned in district workshops, and school-based staff development activities. While Eisenhower funds contributed about \$900,000 in 1996-97 to such activities, the district's USI contributed close to \$3 million in that year and was considered an umbrella for all professional development in mathematics and science in the district.

In Middle City, the relationships between the USI and Eisenhower-assisted activities is more than just financial, because a number of the staff of the USI have been associated with Eisenhower-assisted activities for years prior to the district winning the USI. The USI's leadership includes a former Eisenhower coordinator and an Eisenhower-assisted mentor teacher. In addition, many of the USI's mentor teachers have formerly been mentor teachers funded by the Eisenhower program. It appears that, at least in this district, the Eisenhower funds have over the years developed leadership and capacity in mathematics and science that provided a foundation for the USI.

In contrast to Middle City, the relationship between Eisenhower-assisted activities and those of NSF-funded programs is not close in some other districts. Through the state's SSI, Richmond, New York's math and science teachers have access to extensive professional development opportunities, in particular summer institutes and ongoing teacher study groups. At the district level, however, coordination between the Eisenhower program and the SSI is virtually nonexistent. The district distributes the bulk of its Eisenhower funds directly to schools where school staff determine how they should be used. In the views of district administrators and teachers, professional development related to the SSI is separate from the Eisenhower funds that schools receive, and neither administrators nor teachers seem to see the district's Eisenhower funds as an opportunity to build on or expand opportunities available through the SSI.

In another district, South City, Florida, coordination between Eisenhower and USI activities damaged professional development activities in the short term, at least from the perspective of the Eisenhower coordinator and some teachers. According to the first report from this evaluation, South City, Eisenhower program activities were "subsumed by" the USI (Birman, Reeve, & Sattler, 1998, p. 31). Activities supported by Eisenhower funds tended to be shorter in duration and involve less follow-up than they had prior to their collaboration with the USI. The Eisenhower coordinator attributes this to the fact that the USI director and staff are relatively inexperienced in planning, organizing, and providing professional development. While the USI director recognizes the shortcomings of the new approach, and the Eisenhower coordinator looks forward to resolving differences in their approaches, the working relationship between the two was at least initially problematic.

Our survey data clearly indicate that coordination and co-funding are common between Eisenhower-assisted and NSF-funded activities, as we would expect since both programs focus on mathematics and science initiatives. The case of Middle City illustrates such collaboration and co-funding at its best. There, the USI and Eisenhower staff work collaboratively, and the USI benefits from the expertise and capacity built up through the years of Eisenhower funding. However, the other case study examples indicate that, while NSF funds can provide excellent opportunities for collaboration and pooling of resources with Eisenhower-assisted activities, districts do not always effectively capitalize on these opportunities.

Consistent with our survey data, we find fewer examples in our case studies of coordination with professional development funded by ED programs. One example of good coordination with an ED program is in Weller, Kentucky. There, Eisenhower and Goals 2000 funds are combined for an

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annual professional development project. The project always involves a teacher demonstration on a particular topic in mathematics or science. In 1997-98 the topic was finance, with primary grade teachers concentrating on money units and related mathematics skills and secondary school teachers looking at designing and marketing products. Outside providers train master teachers; in 1997-98 the training was provided by the Kentucky Math Council. Master teachers then develop two-week demonstration units. Other teachers come into a master teacher's classroom in the morning to help plan, observe the lessons, and then take the unit back to their own schools to experiment with it and to demonstrate it for their colleagues. A total of approximately 40 teachers, selected by their principals, participated in this activity. Goals 2000 provided the majority of funds for the activity, and Eisenhower funds helped pay for the training of the master teachers.

Rhinestone, Texas, also has strong coordination in several areas. The Eisenhower coordinator and the Title I coordinator in Rhinestone are both subject-area specialists, the former in math and science and the latter in language arts; two other subject-area specialists also work in the district. The four individuals discuss needs of specific schools and, on occasion, ways of encouraging curriculum integration. Each week they meet to discuss the use of Eisenhower funds in supporting Title I goals, and the Title I coordinator co-chairs the committee that decides how Eisenhower funds will be used each year.

In some other case districts, there is little or no coordination between district-level Eisenhower and Title I staff. More than one Eisenhower coordinator was surprised that we asked to interview Title I coordinators, telling us that Title I staff knew nothing about the Eisenhower program. One reason for this is the focus of Title I activities. In a number of districts, Title I focused exclusively on reading and language arts. In one district where Title I focuses on mathematics, its focus is elementary mathematics, while Eisenhower funds are viewed as mainly for secondary school teachers.

In several case-study districts, the provision of Title I funds directly to schools while maintaining Eisenhower funds at the district level is another reason for limited coordination between the two funding streams. In Lone Star, Texas, the 1997-98 school year was the first year under a new organizational system, and was a challenging one for teachers and administrators. Because district administrators were reorganized into subdistricts and most people had vastly altered responsibilities, little professional development, Eisenhower-assisted or otherwise, took place. However, other factors still point to a lack of coordination between the Eisenhower program and Title I. In Lone Star, all Title I funds are used in school wide projects, with funds devolving directly to the school level. Eisenhower funds, however, are maintained at the district level. Therefore, decisions about the two programs are not made by the same people, or even by people in the same location. This is the case in other districts as well, where there are school-wide Title I projects but district control over Title II funds.

## **Summary: Alignment and Coordination**

Our results indicate that most teachers are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators report meeting their legislative responsibilities to align Eisenhower professional development with state and district standards and assessments, and to coordinate with others in funding and operating Eisenhower professional development activities. Aligning professional development with standards and assessments could contribute to a coherent professional development program that is focused on goals and objectives that are important for student learning, and that support high standards for learning (Smith & O'Day, 1991; Cohen & Hill, 1998). There is, however, more alignment with

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standards than with assessments. This may reflect the fact that the ESEA requirement of aligned assessments had not yet gone into effect at the time of our data collection, and in some places, assessments may not have been well-aligned to the standards; also, assessments have proven more difficult to develop than standards. Further, state standards and assessments have as strong a relationship to Eisenhower-assisted activities as do the more immediate district standards and assessments. One possible explanation for this is that district policy tools tend to reflect state policy tools, and so they are seen as interchangeable. It may also reflect greater stakes associated with state standards and assessments.

The high level of co-funding and collaboration with other Federal programs reported by our sample of districts suggests that Eisenhower coordinators are attempting to integrate the needs and requirements of their federal program in the design of professional development activities. This increases the district's ability to use funds efficiently and effectively. Clearly here, however, the mathematics and science focus of Eisenhower is a major explanatory factor. Coordination and co-funding is nearly twice as prevalent with NSF mathematics and science initiatives than with ED initiatives that do not share the mathematics/science focus. Furthermore, our case-study data indicate that some of the coordination between Eisenhower coordinators and those of other ED programs may be fairly superficial. Eisenhower coordinators report that coordination often consists of occasional conversations with other program administrators. Further, these conversations do not necessarily include discussion of strategies for making multiple-funding streams support each other or integrating professional development across programs.

Districts with a higher proportion of students in poverty are somewhat more likely to co-fund with other federal programs and others in professional development related roles. This might be due to the fact that high-poverty districts tend to receive money from multiple federal programs whose formulas are often designed to favor districts with larger numbers of children from low-income families. The existence of more sources of funding creates the need for more collaborative efforts in employing program funds to aid in the education of students with special needs. Thus, having multiple sources of funding and a common purpose—addressing the needs of students in poverty—may facilitate coordination in higher-poverty districts.

A more pronounced finding relates to district size. Large districts are more likely than other districts to report aligning their professional development with standards and assessments, and both large districts and consortia co-fund with other programs more than smaller districts do. Large districts and consortia may be able to incorporate effective collaborative practices because of economies of scale (e.g., investment in collaborative efforts is less expensive as the number of participants and programs increases), and also because they have larger, better infrastructures for planning and delivering professional development. Also, large districts are more likely to have subject-area specialists that are integrated into the mathematics/science community. By contrast, smaller districts may have fewer programs and personnel with which to collaborate, partly because in smaller districts the Eisenhower coordinator tends to assume several roles. Smaller districts also may not have the capacity or incentive to work across programs in the way that often becomes necessary in larger districts. If this is the case, perhaps federal technical assistance providers should consider giving smaller districts more guidance to help them organize and combine their funding streams, and collaborate with other professional development providers in their district.

The fact that most of the districts in our national profile of Eisenhower coordinators report engaging in alignment, collaboration, and co-funding indicates that they are attempting to meet the requirements of the legislation in these areas, and also are engaging in practices that have been linked

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to providing high-quality professional development. The coordination and alignment, however, appears to be greatly enhanced when there is a shared subject-matter focus, and in larger districts and districts with more students in poverty.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE VISION: DISTRICT PROCEDURES FOR THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

### **Section Findings**

- ◆ *Less than one-third of the nation's teachers are in school districts that have developed performance indicators to help them track the quality and effectiveness of professional development activities. Of those teachers who are in districts that do have indicators, less than a quarter are in districts that collect data on the indicators.*
- ◆ *The majority of the nation's teachers are in districts that assess teachers' needs formally; nearly all teachers are in districts that use teacher surveys to do so, and most also use less formal methods such as meetings or conversations.*
- ◆ *Most of the nation's teachers are in districts that evaluate the effectiveness of Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. These evaluations almost always involve a teacher satisfaction survey; they are less likely to involve formally observing teaching practice or assessing effects on student achievement.*
- ◆ *Districts provide more types of guidance (e.g., assistance in interpreting Title II rules and in developing professional development plans) to schools than to other providers of professional development. Among all types of support that districts provide, they are least likely to focus on data-driven support, such as evaluations and indicators.*

The Eisenhower legislation reflects the “continuous improvement” paradigm adopted by the federal government for all of its programs. Specifically, the legislation states that “a local educational agency shall set specific performance indicators for improving teaching and learning through professional development” (Section 2208(a)(2)). This provision applies to all of the district’s professional development, not just the activities supported with Eisenhower funds. The legislation also requires that each LEA “submit a report to the State every three years... regarding the progress of such agency toward performance indicators... as well as on the effectiveness of [the LEA’s] activities...” supported with Eisenhower funds (Section 2401(b)). These requirements are consistent with experts’ views that accountability for the outcomes of professional development is a key component of high-quality professional development (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998).

Performance indicators are designed to evaluate district professional development efforts by establishing measurable benchmarks to track progress toward the district’s goals and objectives. Of course, having such indicators then implies a process of decisionmaking in school districts that is grounded in objective data. Advocates of education reform are increasingly promoting the value of school districts’ using data to make decisions about directions for teaching and learning (e.g., Bernhardt, 1998). Two provisions of the Eisenhower legislation that have the potential for encouraging districts to produce data regarding their professional development activities are the

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provision for assessing the needs of teachers, and the provision for assessing Eisenhower-assisted activities.

The Eisenhower legislation requires that the LEA include in its application an assessment of local needs for professional development, as identified by local education agency and school staff (Section 2208(b)). This type of needs assessment of teachers is an important first step in planning a professional development strategy that accurately addresses the strengths and weaknesses of teachers in a particular district (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998).

Evaluating the effectiveness of Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities also should contribute to districts' tracking of progress toward professional development goals. As mentioned above, the legislation requires districts to both assess progress toward established indicators for the district as a whole, as well as to report on the effectiveness of Eisenhower-assisted district activities. Guskey (1997) notes that commonly used measures for evaluating the effects of professional development include participants' reactions to the experience; participants' actual use of knowledge and skills they have gained; and the impact of participants' changes in knowledge and skills on student learning. Guskey argues that studies of professional development ought to focus less on teacher perceptions and reactions and place greater emphasis on teacher and student outcomes of professional development.

Thus, Eisenhower requirements for establishing indicators, assessing the needs of teachers, and evaluating Eisenhower-assisted activities are some of the ingredients in the legislation that could support a data-based continuous improvement process. Knowledge and use of indicators should provide target goals and benchmarks for measuring progress. Information about teachers' needs should assist in setting the goals and objectives for professional development. Evaluation data should provide one means for determining whether professional development activities are moving teachers toward these goals.

However, to have an effect on the design of professional development activities, continuous improvement means more than establishing goals, measuring progress toward these goals, and evaluating professional development activities. Continuous improvement also means communicating with schools and teachers about state and district standards and assessments, sharing the data collected from needs assessments and evaluation, and establishing goals and indicators for professional development. The term continuous improvement implies a "feedback loop" in which data about progress are part of continuous communication, and where data become part of a discussion about strengths and weaknesses, and future strategies and decisions.

Thus, in addition to establishing indicators, assessing teacher's needs, and evaluating the effectiveness of professional development activities, another important role that districts may have is to offer guidance, support, or technical assistance to those who are involved in planning and implementing professional development. Schools often have a role in planning and implementing professional development activities, and districts may play a role in helping to familiarize schools with the standards and expectations of districts, state administrators, and policy makers, as well as with data from district data collection efforts. Furthermore, in addition to school staff, district staff, outside consultants, or individuals from other organizations such as teacher centers or regional service centers operated in some states may be providers of professional development activities. Some providers may be unfamiliar with the district's vision and goals. In these cases, district data about their performance, and guidance about district goals and policies, could help these providers integrate their activities with district goals and standards. District support to school staff and other

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providers of professional development can help to enable teachers and schools to have professional development choices that fit within the state and districts' overall vision and focus. In requiring districts to establish goals and objectives for professional development, assess needs of teachers, track progress toward goals, and evaluate the effects of professional development activities, the Eisenhower legislation highlights the role of the district in supporting professional development activities. In these provisions, the legislation is consistent with recent literature on school reform, which also emphasizes the critical role of school districts in guiding professional development (Elmore & Burney, 1996; Spillane & Thompson, 1997).

In this section, we use our national profile of Eisenhower coordinators to examine the aspects of Eisenhower-assisted professional development that relate to performance indicators, needs assessments, evaluations of Eisenhower-assisted activities, and the provision of guidance to schools and professional development providers. We describe how successful districts are in meeting the Title II requirements for having performance indicators in place and collecting information on these indicators, and examine whether districts know about and use state-level performance indicators in their evaluation and improvement process. We describe the ways in which districts collect information about needs for professional development, and whether and how districts evaluate their Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. Finally, we describe the ways in which districts provide guidance to schools and professional development providers regarding Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities.

## **Presence and Use of Performance Indicators**

We asked Eisenhower coordinators if their district had developed, or was currently developing, performance indicators for professional development. Data from the national survey of district Eisenhower coordinators are somewhat discouraging with respect to district response to the requirements for having and using performance indicators. Some district Eisenhower coordinators continue to be unaware of the requirements, or, if they are aware of them, they have not yet acted on them. As Exhibit 5.4 illustrates, less than a third (32 percent) of the nation's teachers are in districts that have performance indicators in place.

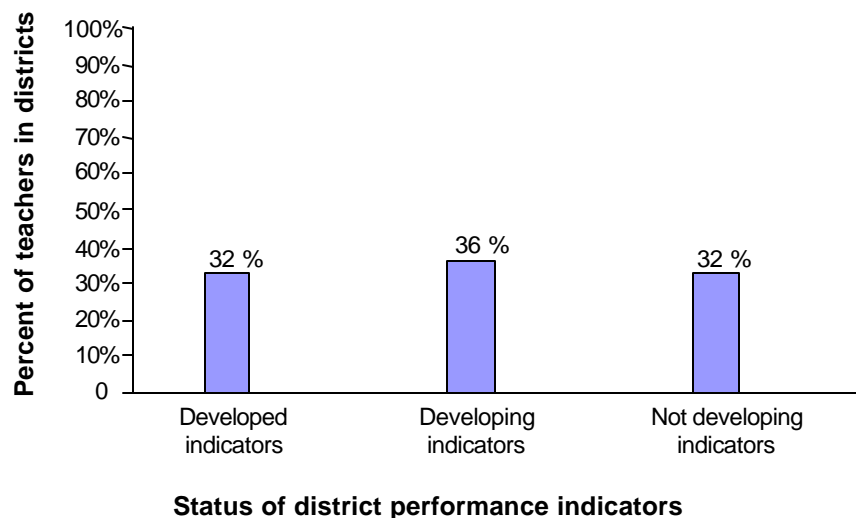
Of teachers who are in districts that have already developed performance indicators (32 percent), 60 percent are in districts that report that they collect data on those indicators to measure progress; an additional 40 percent of teachers are in districts that say they have plans to do so (data not shown). In other words, fewer than one in five, or about 18 percent, of teachers are in districts that currently collect data on performance indicators that they have established to guide their professional development efforts.

While most of the nation's teachers are in districts that have not yet developed district-level performance indicators, district efforts to plan, evaluate, and track the progress of their professional development activities could benefit, in principle, from indicators developed by their states. However, a majority of teachers are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators are not aware of any performance indicators developed at the state level; only 34 percent of teachers are in districts where coordinators report that they knew of state-level indicators. Of these, 70 percent of teachers are in

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## EXHIBIT 5.4

### Percent of Teachers in Districts According to Status of District Performance Indicators for Professional Development (n=363)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that 32 percent of teachers are in districts that report that they have developed performance indicators. Each bar and the number on top of it represent the percent of teachers in districts for each category.

districts in which district Eisenhower coordinators report that the state indicators affect their use of Eisenhower funds or other district activities (data not shown). In other words, less than 25 percent of the nation's teachers are in districts that report being affected by their states' indicators for professional development.

Of the district Eisenhower coordinators who say that the state indicators affect their districts, coordinators report that state indicators affect the district in the following ways (these answers were in response to an open-ended question that asked in what ways, if any, are indicators used to guide change in Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities):

- ◆ help the district assess school, teacher, and/or overall district needs,
- ◆ help the district focus and plan its use of Eisenhower funds,
- ◆ influence the types and characteristics of Eisenhower-assisted activities (i.e., duration, in-district versus out-of-district, workshop versus institute),
- ◆ encourage districts to strive to meet state standards, and
- ◆ provide a measure for districts to use to evaluate their performance.

In general, the district case studies mirror results from the district survey findings. There is a lack of awareness of the states' performance indicators. Three of the five case-study states collect

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data from districts regarding the state's indicators. Case-study districts in these states supply the requested information to state coordinators, but they do not perceive the data as part of a system of evaluating progress toward state or district goals for professional development. In at least two of the case-study states, districts are required to select a subset of the state indicators and report their progress on them. However, district Eisenhower coordinators do not consider those indicators they report on to the state to be their district's performance indicators, and these indicators do not appear to be in any way guiding the districts in their planning and evaluation of professional development. Only one of the six districts in these states had "developed" indicators—and that district adopted a subset of the state's indicators as its own.

## **Assessing the Needs of Teachers**

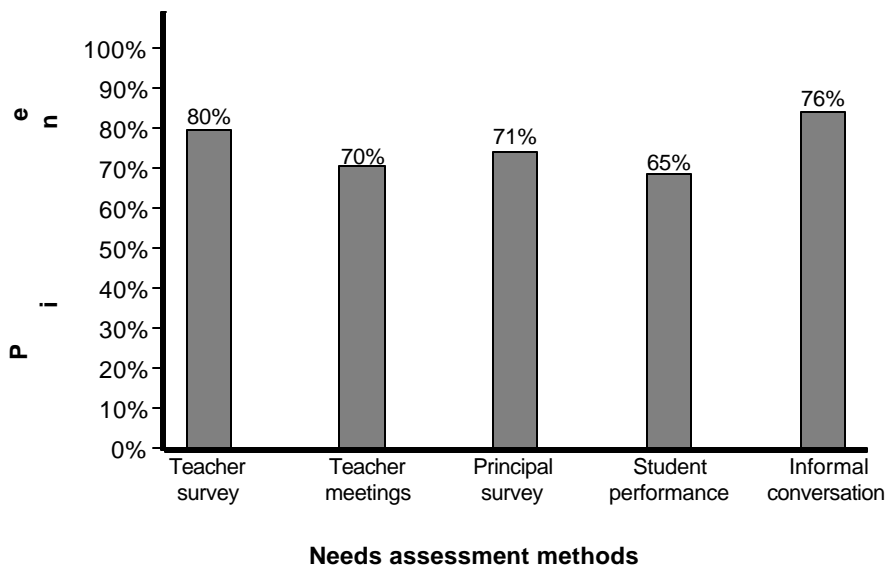
In addition to establishing indicators, obtaining information about the needs of teachers is a first step in planning for professional development, and as mentioned earlier, the legislation requires that districts conduct needs assessments. We asked district Eisenhower coordinators if teachers' needs for professional development are assessed, and if so, in which ways they are assessed (note: this question applies to all types of professional development, not just Eisenhower-assisted professional development). Options on the survey were: 1) with a survey of teachers, 2) with meetings of teacher representatives, 3) with a survey of principals or department chairs, 4) with measures of student performance, and 5) with informal conversations.

Just under 85 percent of teachers are in districts where coordinators say that they formally assess teachers' professional development needs (data not shown). As Exhibit 5.5 shows, most of the districts use several methods for assessing needs. Teacher surveys are the most popular method; 80 percent of teachers are in districts that formally assess needs using this method. Between 70 and 76 percent of teachers are in districts that use meetings with teacher representatives, surveys of the principal or the department chairperson, and informal conversations, and 65 percent of teachers are in districts that use measures of student performance to determine teachers' professional development needs. Our survey data do not yield information on how often needs assessments of the various types are used or how heavily districts rely on these different methods.

In our case-study districts, however, we find examples of how these approaches to assessing needs are used. Six of our case sites conduct some type of teacher survey to identify teacher needs for professional development. For example, needs assessment appears to rely exclusively on a teacher survey in Weller, Kentucky. There, teachers are asked about future needs for professional development at the end of their evaluation of professional development activities. Last year, the following were among the most frequently mentioned needs: more planning time in order to implement new ideas; information on how to use and integrate technology into the curriculum; strategies to work with students with special needs; information on working in classrooms with students of varying ages and ability levels; help in collaborative and cooperative learning; time management; new and current literature on teaching and learning; and stress management. Such information, and evaluations of teacher satisfaction with professional development activities, are the basis for planning Eisenhower-assisted activities, which in this district is done almost entirely by the Eisenhower coordinator herself.

## EXHIBIT 5.5

## Percent of Teachers in Districts That Use Different Methods to Assess Teachers' Professional Development Needs (n=363)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that 80 percent of teachers are in districts that report using teacher surveys as a method of needs assessment. Each bar and the number on top of it represent the percent of teachers in districts for each category.

These examples of the variation of needs that teachers identify highlight the challenge in aligning teachers' needs with district standards, and addressing potential differences between the two sources. Relying exclusively on teachers' assessments of their own needs may be problematic, because teachers' perceptions of their weaknesses are influenced by their instructional philosophy and goals, which may not be consistent with district standards and goals.

Student test scores are the main source of needs assessment data in some districts, though sometimes they are used in combination with other sources of information. For example, in Rhinestone, Texas, the needs of teachers are determined by a combination of informal conversations, in person and by telephone, "walk throughs" by district staff in order to observe and talk with teachers, and an analysis of TAAS scores. Teachers call district staff to express their needs, and their opinions about the types of professional development that they would like. But, according to district administrators, academic achievement, as measured by the Stanford 9 and TAAS scores, often determine who is targeted for professional development and the type of professional development that is needed. District administrators indicate that reliance on student achievement tests to guide professional development needs is more possible for mathematics than science in some districts, because students are tested more often in mathematics than in science.

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## Evaluating Professional Development Activities

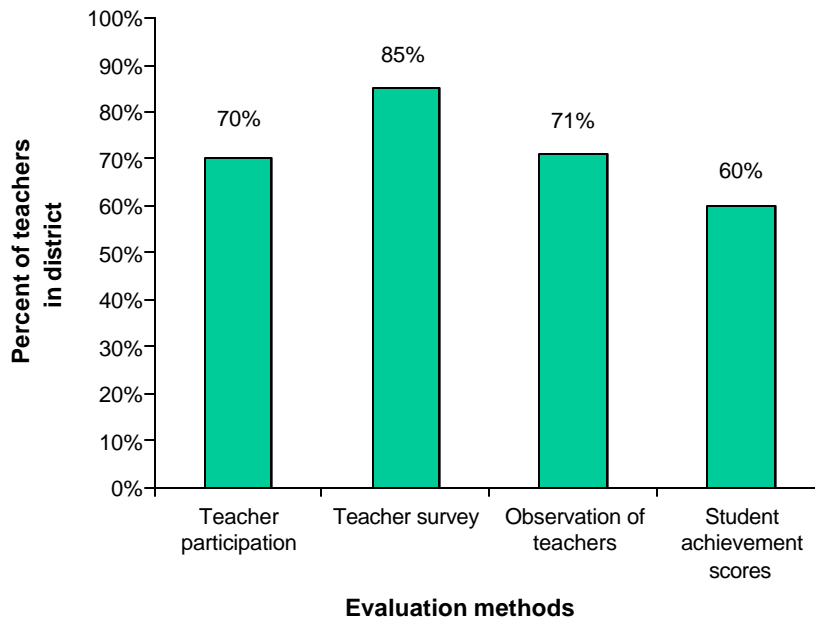
Another mechanism for continuous improvement is evaluation. Most teachers (93 percent) are in districts in which district Eisenhower coordinators report that they evaluate their Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities (data not shown). Given that assessment of these activities against performance indicators is required in the authorizing legislation, it is perhaps surprising that as many as seven percent of teachers are in districts that acknowledge that they do *not* evaluate Eisenhower-assisted professional development.

Districts report that they evaluate Eisenhower-assisted professional development in a number of ways. We asked district coordinators to indicate which of the following ways they evaluate the activities: 1) by number of teachers participating in professional development, 2) with a teacher satisfaction survey, 3) with observations of teachers, and 4) with student achievement scores. We did not ask the frequency with which districts use these evaluation methods; districts may use some of them only occasionally.

Exhibit 5.6 shows that 85 percent of teachers are in districts that evaluate Eisenhower professional development activities using a teacher satisfaction survey.

### EXHIBIT 5.6

#### Percent of Teachers in Districts That Use Different Methods to Evaluate Eisenhower-assisted Activities (n=363)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that 70 percent of teachers are in districts that report using counts of teacher participation as a method for evaluating their Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. Each bar and the number on top of it represent the percent of teachers in districts for each category.

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Approximately three-fourths of teachers are in districts that evaluate activities by the number of teachers who participate (70 percent) and by observing the classroom practices of teachers who have participated (71 percent). The least popular method is using student achievement data to evaluate the effects of professional development, although 60 percent of teachers are in districts that report using this method.

Our case districts appear to reflect our national data in the evidence for reliance on teacher satisfaction surveys to evaluate the outcomes of professional development activities. For example, Maple City, Ohio, uses a standard teacher satisfaction form to evaluate professional development activities. The form asks teachers whether they agree with the following statements:

1. This inservice dealt with a priority issue.
2. The goal(s) of the inservice were clearly stated by the presenter(s).
3. The stated goals(s) of the inservice were achieved.
4. The information was clearly presented.
5. I will modify my teaching behavior as a result of this inservice.
6. The information presented will assist me in my job.
7. A portion of the inservice time was set aside for questions and answers.
8. I believe there was sufficient input from staff in planning this inservice.

Teachers are also asked to respond to three open-ended questions:

1. What was the most valuable part of this inservice?
2. In what ways could this inservice have been improved?
3. Additional comments.

In other case sites, as well, evaluation of professional development involved teacher satisfaction surveys that asked questions similar to those on the Maple City survey.

While our national sample of district Eisenhower coordinators frequently cites the use of observation of teachers and student achievement data as a means for evaluation, our case-study data indicate that districts do not observe teachers or use student data in a formal, systematic way to evaluate the outcomes of professional development activities. Boonetown, Kentucky, is not unusual in its use of student assessments to evaluate professional development activities. There, in addition to teacher satisfaction surveys, professional development is considered successful if KIRIS scores increase in the targeted areas. While this is an outcome-based strategy for evaluation, it can be considered a remediation approach rather than a capacity-building approach; it appears to neglect two critical central steps—an *objective assessment of the quality of the professional development activity*, and the *evaluation of the effects of professional development on teaching itself*. In neglecting these two areas, the attribution of test score increases to Eisenhower professional development is tenuous. In the sequence of steps from needs assessment, to setting goals, to designing and participating in

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professional development, to changes in teaching, to student learning, to student outcomes, we find that none of our case districts systematically observe teachers' practices after they have participated in professional development activities in a systematic way.

Some coordinators in our case districts state that they observe teachers, but their observations appear to be informal. For example, in Rhinestone, Texas, the Eisenhower coordinator visits classrooms to observe teachers who have recently been through training to see if new ideas are in use in the classroom. On the whole, her evaluation seemed cursory to our case visitors. While she visits each classroom and uses an NCTM checklist of effective classroom practices for criteria, she relies primarily on anecdotal notes to record her observations. She explains that her goal is not to make teachers feel that they are being evaluated, but rather to send a message of assistance and support to teachers. Further, as we reported earlier, in this and other districts, one criterion for evaluating professional development in the schools is students' academic achievement. However, without rigorous, longitudinal, well-designed studies, it is difficult to attribute students' test score increases to teachers' professional development experiences.

## **District Support and Guidance to Schools and Professional Development Providers**

Continuous improvement means setting goals, collecting and reporting measurable indicators of progress, assessing the needs of teachers, and evaluating professional development activities. However, it also means communicating goals and evaluation results with those who provide professional development, so that they are able to incorporate district goals into their professional development plans, and know how their activities will be judged. Professional development activities often are provided by schools, or by district staff or individuals hired by the district. Institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations also frequently provide professional development to teachers in districts; and districts may work with these organizations in various ways to offer them guidance and support.

To find out about the types of support and guidance that districts offer to schools and professional development providers, we asked district Eisenhower coordinators a number of questions about the types of communication they have with schools and with providers of professional development and the guidance they provide to schools and other professional development providers. Specifically, we asked coordinators in which of the following ways district Eisenhower staff exchange information with schools regarding professional development: regular visits and observations, telephone calls, required reports, and/or required evaluations. We also asked them which of the following five types of assistance they provide to schools: guidance in interpreting Title II rules, help conducting needs assessments, help developing professional development plans, help developing specific activities, and help developing performance indicators for professional development.

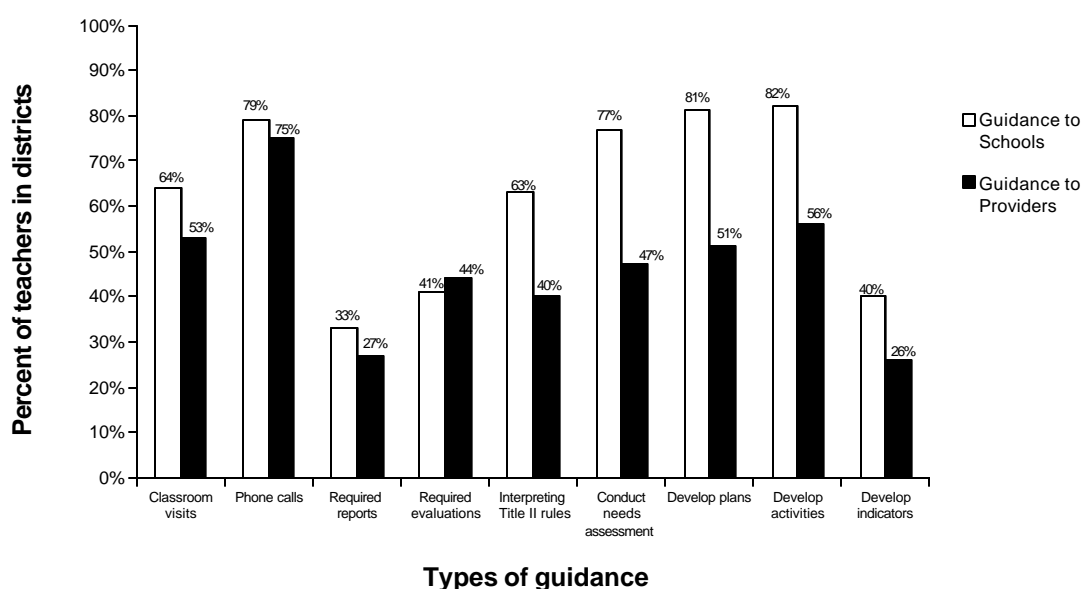
On average, districts provide more guidance to schools than to providers of professional development. Districts report providing 6.2 of the nine types of support to schools and 4.6 to providers. Standard deviations are quite large (2.6 for schools and 3.4 for providers), which suggests that there is a large variation in the number of ways that districts provide guidance (data not shown).

As illustrated in Exhibit 5.7, districts are about equally likely to provide support to schools as to providers in the form of classroom visits, phone calls, and required reports and evaluations. However, teachers are much less likely to be in districts that provide the other types of guidance (i.e.,

interpreting Title II rules, conducting needs assessments, and developing professional development plans and activities indicators) to providers of professional development than to schools. Also, districts provide fewer data-related types of support (e.g., reports and evaluations) than other types of support, to both schools and professional development providers. Although these data provide information about whether or not district coordinators engage in particular types of support and guidance, we have no information on the quality or frequency of these activities.

## EXHIBIT 5.7

### Percent of Teachers in Districts in Which Eisenhower Staff Provide Different Types of Guidance about Professional Development to Schools and Professional Development Providers (n=363)

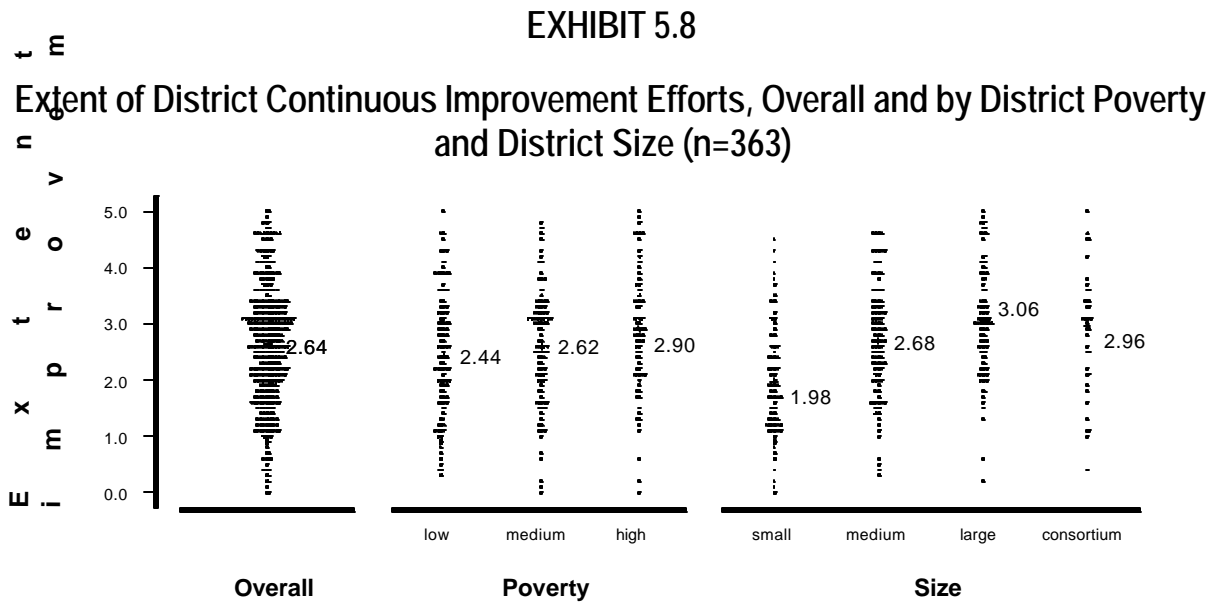


**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that 64 percent of teachers are in districts that report using classroom visits as a type of guidance that Eisenhower staff provide to their schools, and 53 percent of teachers are in districts that report using classroom visits as a type of guidance to professional development providers. Each bar and the number on top of it represent the percent of teachers in districts for each category.

To measure the extent to which districts differ on all continuous improvement measures, we created a composite of indicators, needs assessment, evaluation, and guidance to schools and professional development providers. We standardized the variables comprising each of these five measures, adjusted the values to be on a zero to one scale, and then summed them to form an overall continuous improvement composite. Exhibit 5.8 shows that there is significant variation in continuous improvement according to both district size and poverty level. Small districts employ significantly fewer continuous improvement efforts than either consortia or large and medium districts, and medium districts employ significantly fewer continuous improvement efforts than large districts. Similarly, low-poverty districts have fewer continuous improvement mechanisms than high-poverty districts. Again, these results may reflect that large districts have more staff and a more comprehensive professional development program, which requires more systematic monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, high-poverty districts are more likely to have support from other federal

programs, such as Title I, Part A, which also emphasize the use of indicators, needs assessments and evaluation.



	<b>Significant Pairwise Contrasts</b>
Size	Small vs. Medium, Small vs. Large; Small vs. Consortium; Medium vs. Large
Poverty	Low vs. High

**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first distribution shows that teachers are in districts that report an average continuous improvement score of 2.6, where 0 indicates no continuous improvement efforts, and five indicates the largest extent of continuous improvement efforts. Continuous improvement differs significantly by both district poverty level and district size. Each dot represents one district. As the number of districts at one data point (or value) increases, the dots form a horizontal line increases in length. Each distribution represents the distribution for that particular category. The number to the right of the distribution is the mean.

## Summary: Continuous Improvement

Most districts do not have performance indicators and many remain unaware of the requirement to develop performance indicators and of the purposes underlying state indicators and data collection activities, although Congress' intent is clear in these provisions to establish and measure progress on performance indicators. Strategic planning that includes developing goals and objectives and delineating how progress toward achieving these goals will be measured is key to a successful professional development program (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998). Clearly, there is room in this area for a heightened federal role in assisting states and districts to learn how to develop well-constructed indicators, how to collect meaningful data, and how to use the indicators as part of a system of continuous improvement.

Our national survey data also show that while most districts collect information about the needs of teachers, and evaluate Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities, as required by law, their approaches to these activities are not as strong as they could be. Our survey and case-study data reveal that district needs assessments and evaluations are typically based on teacher surveys. This heavy reliance on teacher reports does not take into account the potential differences between teachers' instructional goals and district goals and standards. Further, teachers may not be

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able to identify their own weaknesses, and even if they can, they may not be able to identify appropriate measures to address the weaknesses.

Districts also tend to use classroom observations and student achievement data in needs assessment and evaluation, but not in rigorous and systematic ways. Most districts do not have the resources to use these approaches effectively. Studies that link professional development with student outcomes would require costly long-term data collections and an evaluation capacity that many districts do not have; these types of evaluations are better conducted as part of well-designed research studies. It seems more appropriate and effective for districts to focus their evaluations on assessing how well their professional development activities reflect high-quality structural and core features. This can be done through carefully crafted teacher surveys that ask teachers specific questions about the contact hours, duration, active learning opportunities, content focus, and coherence of the activity, as well as through direct observation of the activity.

Districts do often provide guidance to schools and professional development providers. However, despite the need to use data to make decisions about professional development activities, districts do not appear to communicate often to schools and professional development providers about indicators and evaluations. There are a number of possible reasons for this. First, district Eisenhower coordinators themselves may not be trained as evaluators, and may not be familiar with uses of data to judge their progress. Second, a number of Eisenhower coordinators in our case districts indicate that they are aware of the deficiencies of their approaches, but do not have adequate resources to conduct more thorough evaluation and data collection activities. Considering the critical nature of the requirements to establish indicators and to evaluate Eisenhower-assisted activities, it may be helpful to determine more definitively what the barriers are to establishing indicator systems and high-quality evaluations, and to provide guidance and assistance to help the districts overcome these barriers.

## **THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN PLANNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Section Findings**

- ◆ *Most teachers are in districts that report professional development being planned at both the school and district levels.*
- ◆ *Most teachers are in districts where teachers are involved in planning professional development in a variety of ways, such as through teacher committees, needs assessments, or informal consultation.*
- ◆ *While most districts rely on schools to plan some professional development activities, districts vary widely in their interpretations of the “80-20” rule. Some districts interpret the rule to require that 80 percent of funds be allocated directly to schools. Others interpret the rule to mean that most Eisenhower activities occur at the school site. Still other districts interpret the rule to allow 80 percent of activities to be determined by district-wide assessments of teacher needs. Currently, all of these interpretations are correct, according to the Department of Education.*

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Aligning professional development activities with standards and assessments, and coordinating with activities funded by other programs, can be part of building a vision for how professional development can support school reform. Once such a vision is established, continuous improvement activities, such as establishing indicators and collecting data about teacher needs and the effectiveness of professional development activities, can be important to implementing this vision. Another aspect of building and implementing a vision for professional development is involving teachers in planning professional development activities.

The Eisenhower legislation pays special attention to involving teachers and school staff in planning professional development activities. Such planning can occur at any level of the formal school district hierarchy, and can involve teachers and other school staff in a variety of roles. For example, administrators can plan professional development activities at the district level, with the advice of teachers, or using information from teachers about their needs. Alternatively, professional development can be planned at the school level, by full faculties or by teacher representatives, or by principals without the involvement of teachers. Additionally, in school districts, decisions about professional development may be made at some level in between the district and the school, by “clusters” of schools. These clusters may be “feeder patterns” (a high school and the elementary and middle schools that “feed” it), or they may be some other group of schools (e.g., all high schools or all elementary schools in the district). As with district and school-level decisions, cluster-level decisions can involve teachers in a variety of roles. At whatever level, the goal of planning for professional development is to design activities and experiences that improve the quality of teaching and learning by supporting the needs of teachers.

Whether the planning for professional development occurs at the district, cluster, or school levels, the odds of meeting teacher needs are increased if teachers are involved in the planning. Experts agree that teacher involvement in planning contributes to high-quality professional development (Clark, 1992). Teacher involvement in planning can help ensure that professional development addresses the skills that they need, and employ the learning strategies that they find most useful (Clark, 1992; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998).

Echoing this idea, the Eisenhower legislation calls for involving teachers and other school-level staff in planning professional development activities at the district level and Eisenhower-assisted activities at the school levels. The law requires that each LEA’s professional development plan be

...developed with the extensive participation of administrators, staff, and pupil services personnel, which teachers shall also be representative of the grade spans within schools to be served and of schools which receive assistance under part A of Title I (Section 2208(c)(2)).

However, the needs of teachers as individuals may not be the only needs that professional development activities should address. Recent literature suggests that professional development should support both the needs of individual teachers and those of schools as a whole (Loucks-Horsley, 1998). Much of the current research base on school reform emphasizes the importance of approaches that involve improving whole schools (e.g., Bodilly et al., 1996, 1998; Herman et al., 1999; Slavin et al., 1996). Having all teachers in a school share a knowledge base, as well as share expectations for teaching and learning, facilitates teaching and learning toward high standards (O’Day & Smith, 1993). In order to improve, schools may have to address needs that go beyond the needs of their individual teachers. Furthermore, researchers and policy makers are currently emphasizing the importance of professional development that is embedded in the daily life of

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teachers (Guskey, 1997; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998). As a result, they have focused on the school as the logical unit for both planning and implementing ongoing professional development activities (Guskey, 1997; Senge, 1990; Shanker, 1990).

Reflecting this view, the Eisenhower legislation appears to stress the importance of school-level planning and implementation of Eisenhower-assisted activities, in addition to requiring that teachers participate in planning Eisenhower-assisted activities. The legislation specifically states that LEAs

shall use not less than 80 percent of such [Eisenhower Professional Development Program] funds for professional development of teachers, and, where appropriate, administrators, and, where appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, and other staff *of individual schools* in a manner that (A) is determined by such teachers and staff; [and] (B) to the extent practicable, takes place *at the individual school site* (Section 2210(a)(1)). [emphasis added]

This provision, which we refer to as the “80-20 rule,” seems to reflect the Congress’ conclusion that decisions about professional development are best made by school-level staff.

This section of the chapter examines how districts plan professional development activities, with a focus on the roles of school staff, particularly teachers. We present findings on the levels at which planning for professional development occurs and how districts involve teachers in such activities. We then discuss how districts interpret the legislation’s provisions that deal with participation of school staff in planning professional development.

## **Levels of Planning for Professional Development**

We asked coordinators to tell us how many ( i.e., “none,” “some,” “most,” or “all”) of their district’s Eisenhower-assisted activities are planned at the district, school, and cluster level. Exhibit 5.9a indicates the proportion of teachers who are in districts where activities are planned at each of these three levels.

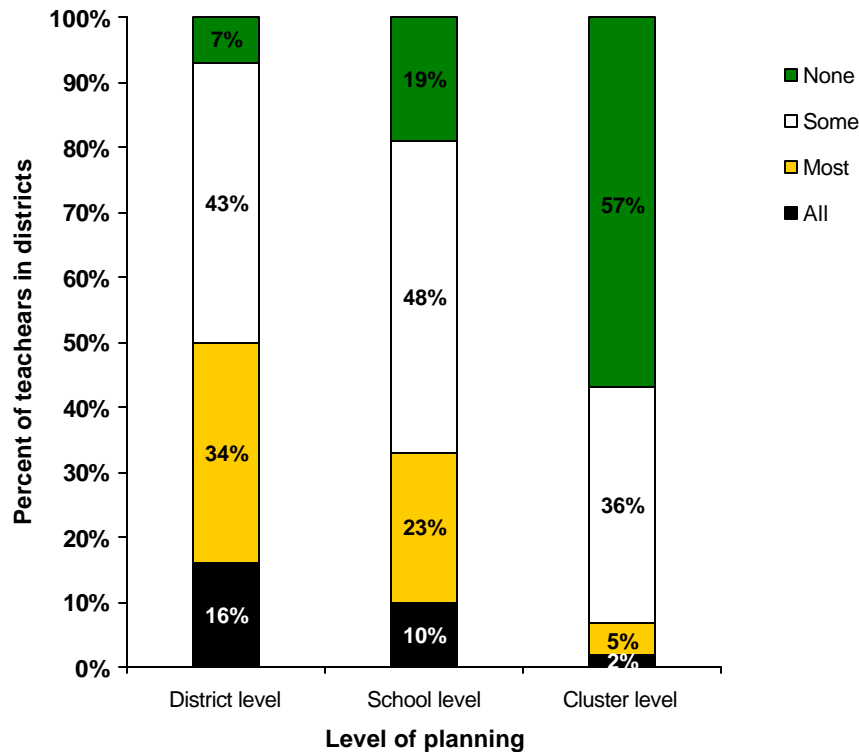
As Exhibit 5.9a shows, 43 percent of teachers are in districts where Eisenhower coordinators estimate that “some” of their Eisenhower-assisted activities are planned at the district level, and 34 percent are in districts where “most” are. Only seven percent of teachers are in districts where no Eisenhower-assisted activities are planned at the district level, and 16 percent are in districts where all activities are planned at the district level.

Over half of all teachers (57 percent) are in districts that are not organized in clusters for planning and administering professional development, and thus report no planning at the cluster level. Thirty-six percent of teachers are in districts that plan “some” professional development at the cluster level, but only five percent are in districts that plan “most” activities at the cluster level, and two percent are in districts in which “all” of the professional development is planned at the cluster-level.

Exhibit 5.9a also shows that 48 percent of teachers are in districts where “some” Eisenhower-assisted activities are planned at the school level, while 23 percent of teachers are in districts where “most” of these activities are planned at this level. Nineteen percent of teachers are in districts where no professional development activities are planned at the school level, while 10 percent of teachers are in districts where “all” such activities are planned at the school level.

## EXHIBIT 5.9a

### Percent of Teachers in Districts Reporting That None, Some, Most, or All Professional Development Activities Are Planned at the District, School, and Cluster Levels (n=363)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that seven percent of teachers are in districts that do not plan *any* of their activities at the district level; 43 percent of teachers are in districts that plan *some* of their professional development at the district level; 34 percent of teachers are in districts that plan *most* of their professional development at the district level; and 16 percent of teachers are in districts that plan *all* of their professional development activities at the district level. Each bar represents the average percent of teachers in districts for each category. The number at the top of each section of the bar is the mean.

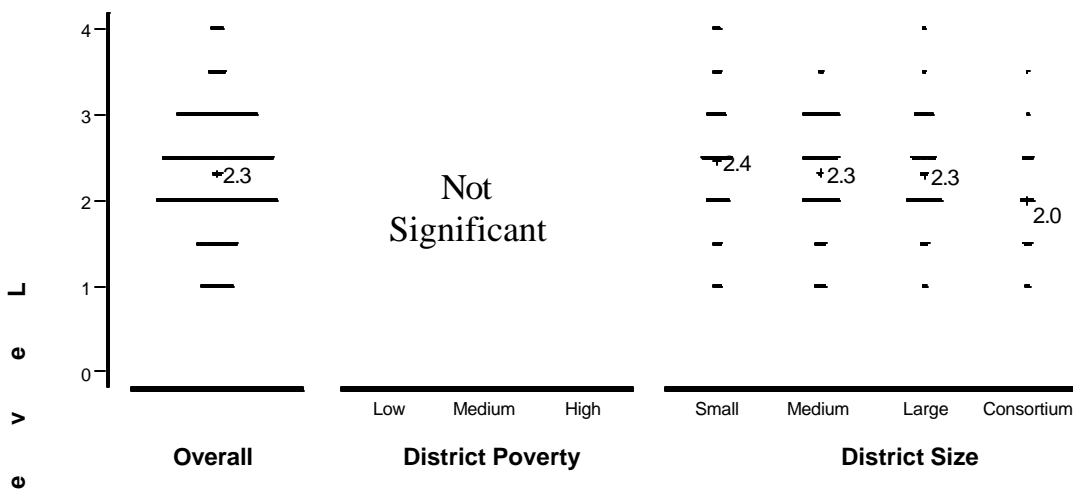
In short, a small proportion of teachers are in districts that plan all of their professional development activities at the school or district level. Many districts, however, plan professional development activities at both the district and school level.

To examine whether there are differences in school-level and district-level planning according to poverty level and size of the district, we created a measure of school-level vs. district-level planning. It is a scale from 0 to 4, where four indicates districts where all planning is done at the school level and no planning is done at the district level, and 0 indicates districts where no planning is done at the school level and all planning is done at the district level. Medium and small districts are more likely than consortia to plan activities at the school level; but there are no differences by poverty, as illustrated in Exhibit 5.9b. It makes sense that consortia would be more likely than single districts to plan at the district level, since consortia by definition are a group of

districts working together. Further, since consortia may be more focused on across-district planning, school-level planning may not be emphasized as much as in single districts.

## EXHIBIT 5.9b

### Extent to Which Professional Development Activities Are Planned at the School vs. District Level, Overall and by District Poverty and District Size (n=363)



<b>Significant Pairwise Contrasts</b>	
Size	Small vs. Consortium, Medium vs. Consortium

**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.  
**How to read this exhibit:** The first distribution shows that on average, teachers are in districts that report an average school-level planning score of 2.3, where zero=all *district* level planning and four=all *school* level planning. The extent of school- vs. district-level planning differs significantly by district size but not by district poverty level. Each dot represents one district. As the number of districts at one data point (or value) increases, the dots form a horizontal line that increases in length. Each distribution represents the distribution for that particular category. The number to the right of the distribution is the mean.

## Teacher Involvement in Planning

Involving teachers in different aspects of planning is important for fostering high-quality professional development, and is emphasized by the Eisenhower legislation. To find out how and to what extent teachers are included in planning, we asked district Eisenhower coordinators if teachers are included in planning Eisenhower-assisted professional development, and in what ways they are included at each level (i.e., district, cluster, and school). We asked which of the following describes the roles teachers play in making decisions about Eisenhower-assisted activities planned at the *district* level: 1) teachers participate in a formal planning committee, 2) teachers are consulted informally, 3) teachers are consulted in a needs assessment, and/or 4) teachers do not play a regular role.

Virtually all teachers (99 percent) are in districts that report that teachers are involved in the planning process (data not shown). Of teachers in districts that report any teacher involvement in planning, 88 percent of teachers are in districts that involve teachers in district-level planning through needs assessments and informal consultation (data not shown). A much smaller proportion of teachers, 65 percent, are in districts that report having teachers directly involved in district-level planning by participating on formal committees (data not shown). Planning through membership on

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a formal committee can be considered to be a much more active form of involvement in planning than through needs assessment or informal communication; thus, the most direct and formal type of teacher involvement is the least common.

We asked coordinators which of the following people participate in making decisions about Eisenhower-assisted activities planned at the *school* level: 1) lead teachers, resource teachers, or department chairs, 2) classroom teachers, through a formally organized committee, and 3) teachers as individuals. We asked the same questions about *cluster*-level planning.

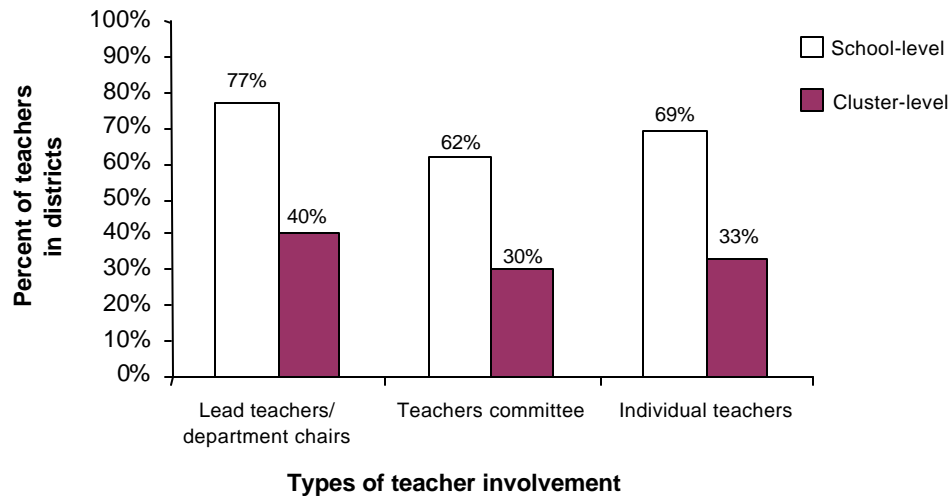
The findings, reported in Exhibit 5.10, suggest that most districts involve teachers in the school- or cluster-level planning process in more than one way, and that teachers are more involved in school-level planning than cluster-level planning. For example, 77 percent of teachers are in districts in which lead teachers, resource teachers, or department chairs participate in school-level planning, while only 40 percent of teachers are in districts that report participation of this type of teacher in cluster-level planning. For both cluster- and school-level planning, the most likely to participate are lead teachers, resource teachers, or department chairs, followed by teachers as individuals. Once again, as with district-level planning, participation on a teacher committee is the least common form of teacher participation; 62 percent of teachers are in districts that report teacher participation in planning through formal committees for school-level planning. Thirty percent of teachers are in districts that report planning participation through formal committees for cluster-level planning.

Because we asked about teachers' formal involvement on committees in planning Eisenhower-assisted professional development at the district, cluster, and school levels, we are able to examine differences in this type of involvement across levels. This formal involvement on committees often represents more responsibility and potential influence for the teacher than needs assessments or informal involvement. For all districts, we find that 65 percent of teachers are in districts in which teachers participate in formal committees at the district level (data not shown), and 62 percent of teachers are in districts in which teachers participate in formal committees at the school level; this difference is not statistically significant (data not shown). Thus, teachers are just as likely to participate in formal committees at the district level as the school level.

Further, for the districts in our sample with clusters, 69 percent of teachers are in districts in which teachers participate in formal committees at the district level, 56 percent are in districts in which teachers participate at the cluster level, and 69 percent are in districts in which teachers participate at the school level (data not shown). Here the differences between clusters and districts, and clusters and schools, are statistically significant, indicating that teachers are significantly less likely to participate in committees at the cluster level than at either the school or district level. These findings reveal no evidence of greater teacher involvement as planning gets closer to the school level, since teachers' formal involvement in planning is similar when professional development is planned either at the school or district level; but cluster-level planning does not, on average, involve as much teacher participation. This may reflect the organizational or management structure of cluster-level decision-making, which may be more likely to have district staff and administrator involvement because of the need to address issues across schools or groups of schools. However, district-level planning also must address across-school issues, so it is unclear why cluster-level planning involves significantly less formal teacher participation.

## EXHIBIT 5.10

### Percent of Teachers in Districts with Different Types of Teacher Involvement in School- and Cluster-level Professional Development Planning (n=363)



**Source:** Telephone Survey of District Eisenhower Coordinators, Spring 1998.

**How to read this exhibit:** The first bar shows that 77 percent of teachers are in districts where teachers/department chairs are involved in school-level planning. The second bar shows that 40 percent of teachers are in districts where teachers/department chairs are involved in cluster-level planning. Each bar and the number on top of it represent the percent of teachers in districts for each category.

In order to test whether formal teacher involvement in planning through committees differs according to the district poverty level or district size, we developed a scale to measure the overall extent of this form of teacher involvement in planning. The measure is an additive composite of district reports of teachers' participation through formal committees at the district, school, and cluster levels. The composite is a function of whether teachers are involved in planning at each of the three levels, weighted by the extent to which activities are planned at the three levels (i.e., coordinators indicated whether some, most, or all of their activities were planned at a particular level). Analysis of the composite indicates that on average, teachers are in districts that involve teachers in the planning process through committees in two-thirds of the levels at which activities are planned (data not shown). There are no statistically significant differences according to district poverty level and district size.

Our case data illustrate how different districts involve teachers in planning professional development activities. A few of our case districts rely only on teacher needs assessment surveys for planning professional development activities, sometimes augmented by informal conversations with teachers. In other districts, teachers take a more active role as members of teacher committees. Data from the following case districts illustrate how teachers' committees can be involved in planning for professional development at the school or district levels.

In West City, California, a district committee, or "implementation team," of up to 100 individuals meets to plan a different reform effort every year, including professional development activities. After the district has identified one area of greatest need a year, based on student and school data, current state or district reform efforts, or plans for textbook adoption, the implementation team meets to plan the reform effort, including professional development. The

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implementation team includes district staff, teachers, IHE staff, representatives of community organizations, and experts in the field. Once the implementation team develops a draft plan, the team seeks input from various constituent groups, and holds focus groups to fine-tune the plan. With these inputs, the draft plan is completed and disseminated district-wide. The plan, including its professional development component, continues to be a working document, and is modified if necessary as the reform proceeds.

Northtown, Connecticut, takes a different approach that relies on teachers in planning professional development at both the district and school levels. At the district level, there is a professional development committee that consists of two co-chairs, one teacher representative from every building or department, a paraprofessional representative, parents, an assistant superintendent, principals, assistant principals, a special educator, a science coordinator, mathematics coordinator, and Eisenhower coordinator. The committee designs a professional development plan for the district, and revises it based on input from a principal focus group. But in this district, there is a building instructional team that assesses the needs of teachers at each school. The team, which consists of teachers, administrators, parents, and school board members, carries out needs assessments in the school, which includes reviewing test results by grade level, and develops school-specific plans. The principal sets professional development goals for individual teachers, based in part on the analyses of the committee.

Weller, Kentucky, also maintains a balance between district and school levels in planning professional development activities. The district convenes a task force that meets periodically throughout the year to monitor professional development needs and oversee progress. The task force has one representative per school (either a teacher or administrator). In addition, each school develops a consolidated plan that identifies the school's professional development needs, and outlines ways to address them and track progress. The principal and a committee of teachers develop the school plan.

These case findings illustrate how some districts rely on teachers, in different ways, as active participants on committees that shape professional development activities.

## **MEETING THE NEEDS OF TEACHERS VS. SCHOOLS: THE 80/20 RULE**

As our survey and case data indicate, districts vary in their emphasis on planning at the district, cluster, and school levels, and in how they involve teachers in planning. This is a critical issue of implementation to understand, because the Eisenhower legislation's "80/20" rule appears to focus on the importance of planning for Eisenhower-assisted activities by school-level staff. The "80/20" rule states that

Each local educational agency that receives funds under this part for any fiscal year shall use not less than 80 percent of such funds for professional development of teachers, and, where appropriate, administrators, and, where appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, and other staff of individual schools in a manner that is determined by such teachers and staff; to the extent practicable, takes place at the individual school site; and is consistent with the local educational agency's application under section 2208, any school plan under part A of title I, and any other plan for professional development carried out with Federal, State, or local funds that emphasizes sustained, ongoing activities (Section 2210(a)(1)(A)(B)(C)).

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Our exploratory case studies revealed that there is a lack of clarity about the meaning of this rule (Birman, Reeve, & Sattler, 1998). We found that Eisenhower coordinators are unsure of whether the rule refers to involvement of teachers from multiple schools in planning professional development at the district level, or to involvement of teachers in planning professional development with others in their own schools, or both. Teacher involvement at the district level can help to ensure that topics and learning activities in professional development programs address areas of knowledge and skills that are relevant to teachers district-wide. This can be particularly important for teachers who may be the only ones teaching a particular subject in their school (e.g., physics teachers in small high schools). At the same time, teacher participation in planning at the school level and professional development that takes place at the school allow for more coherent professional development that is closely tied to the needs of teachers in a particular school, and thus potentially more relevant to classroom practice. Some believe that effects on teaching practice are more likely when there is a critical mass of teachers in a school that are all trying to improve their practice in the same way. In Chapter 3, we reported the importance of collective participation to the perceived benefits of the professional development.

Our national survey of Eisenhower coordinators suggests that districts interpret the “80/20” rule in very different ways. Although many district coordinators report that they understand the requirement “very well” (42 percent) or “adequately” (36 percent), they do not all interpret it similarly (data not shown). In our survey, we asked Eisenhower coordinators to explain how they implement the 80/20 requirement in their district, and common responses include the following approaches:

- ◆ The district conducts a needs assessment to determine teachers’ professional development needs and provides professional development to meet the needs identified.
- ◆ At least 80 percent of Eisenhower funds are allocated directly to the school level (in some districts, schools must apply for their share of the funds).
- ◆ A committee of teachers and administrators identifies professional development needs in the district and plans activities to meet those needs.
- ◆ Most or all Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities must take place at the school site.
- ◆ Teachers or schools select professional development based on their own needs, in some cases selecting from a menu of activities provided by the district.

It is clear from this list that districts interpret the 80-20 rule in a variety of ways. Some districts have devolved funding and all decisions about Eisenhower professional development to schools, while other districts have responded by continuing to plan professional development activities at the district level, with a variety of types of teacher input (e.g., through committees, needs assessments, etc.). In some districts, the provision that Eisenhower-assisted activities “be determined by school-level staff” means simply that teachers determine their own professional development activities by selecting activities from a district-determined menu. Finally, some districts apparently interpret the rule to apply to the location of professional development activities themselves. As

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different as these interpretations are, the Department of Education currently considers all three interpretations to be acceptable.<sup>7</sup>

Other approaches to the 80-20 rule, however, illustrate more confusion about its meaning. In some districts, the rule is interpreted as follows:

- ◆ 80 percent of funds support activities in mathematics and science with the remaining 20 percent supporting activities in other subject areas.
- ◆ 80 percent of funds are used to pay for professional development activities with the remaining 20 percent used to pay for program administration.

In addition, in several districts, coordinators simply say they do not know how to interpret the rule. Clearly, the current 80/20 provision does not provide clear direction to the nation's school districts. Perhaps one reason that the interpretations of the 80/20 rule are so varied is that it mixes together very different elements—the level of planning for professional development, and the location of the professional development itself. Our case studies illustrate that teacher involvement in planning professional development can be independent from locating professional development at the school, or having staff from the school participate together in professional development activities.

In a number of our case districts, Eisenhower-assisted professional development is planned at the district level, but the district emphasizes approaches to professional development that occurred at the school level. In Commuteville, Virginia, a school-board-appointed committee conducts a needs assessment and makes recommendations for Eisenhower-assisted activities. The committee is composed of teachers, parents, students, administrators, and community representatives. While this planning occurs at the district level, Eisenhower funds support two types of professional development that take place in schools. First, a Colleague Teacher Program attempts to meet the needs of first-year teachers by pairing up new teachers with experienced teachers who offer the new teachers guidance, assistance, and support over the course of a the school year. Second, the district trains promising teachers as “lead teachers” in mathematics and science. These teachers serve as resources and mentors to other teachers in their schools. The district's long-term goal is to have lead teachers for mathematics and science in each school.

In Boonetown, Kentucky, professional development occurs largely at the school, while planning the strategy for professional development is a shared activity of the district Eisenhower coordinator and all of the principals in the district. In Boonetown, resource teachers are assigned to schools, where they work with principals to identify school needs for professional development. The strategy grew out of a number of district-wide committees that recommended reliance on resource teachers. The Eisenhower coordinator brought this idea to a meeting of principals, who arranged to fund the resource teachers with school shares of professional development and instructional funds, in addition to Eisenhower funds. The district Eisenhower coordinator has primary responsibility for planning Eisenhower-assisted professional development, although she relies heavily on all of the district's principals, as a group, in making the plans.

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<sup>7</sup> The Department of Education's Office of the General Counsel communicated its interpretation of the 80/20 rule during the preparation of the first report of this evaluation in September 1997, and again during the review of this report in September 1999.

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In contrast to Commuteville and Boonetown, other case districts rely heavily on individual schools to develop plans for professional development activities. In Richmond, New York, each school may apply to the district for a “mini-grant” of \$2,000 of the district’s Eisenhower funds. But delegating planning to the school level does not necessarily result in professional development activities that are embedded in teachers’ daily activities, or even in activities that occur at the school itself. The elementary schools in the district generally use their grants for one-day workshops led by outside consultants. The district’s high school, which receives the same amount of funding as the elementary schools, despite its larger enrollment, uses its mini-grant to allow teachers to judge science fairs, attend conferences, and attend “professional development activities of their choice,” according to the district Eisenhower coordinator.

Both the literature and Eisenhower legislation support teacher participation in planning professional development activities, and professional development that involves all teachers in a school. The data from our teacher activity survey (reported in Chapter 3 of this report) support the value of teachers participating in professional development activities with others from their schools, departments, or grade. However, our case data illustrate that the level at which planning occurs, and teachers’ involvement in it, are not necessarily related to the occurrence of professional development at the school itself, who participates, or the quality of the activities. In other words, planning for professional development at the school level, or occurrence of the professional development activity at the school site, does not necessarily mean that the professional development involves the collective participation of all teachers or groups of teachers at the school.

## **Summary: Involvement of School Level Staff in Planning for Professional Development**

Clearly, the participation of school staff in planning professional development is an important emphasis of the Eisenhower legislation and the professional development literature. Participation in professional development that is embedded in the daily life of teachers at their schools also is emphasized in both the literature and the legislation. Our national data indicate that although teachers are virtually always involved in planning in some way at the district, school, and/or cluster level, teachers participate on a formal basis in committees at about two-thirds of the levels at which planning takes place. Furthermore, while teacher participation in planning professional development may be valuable in communicating what is important to teachers, it appears not to be related to the occurrence of professional development at the school itself.

The intent of the legislation’s 80-20 rule is to provide guidance about the involvement of teachers in planning professional development, and the location of professional development activities. However, the legislative language allows for a large variety of interpretations. In open-ended responses, districts demonstrate a large variance in how they interpret the 80-20 rule. On the one hand, this rule could be interpreted as reflecting the perception of both Congress and professional development experts that decisions about professional development are best made at the school level. On another hand, the rule could be interpreted as calling for school-level professional development at the school site.

Thus, while districts seem to be fulfilling the requirements of the legislation by involving teachers in planning and focusing some planning at the school level, the extent to which these actions are actually fulfilling Congress’ *intent* is unclear. Most of the interpretations districts have made of the 80-20 rule seem to comply with the law, at least as interpreted by the Department of Education. However, Congress’ *intent* in this provision has not been well understood by states or by districts. It

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is possible that in this provision, the Congress intended to ensure that the needs of teachers, as identified by teachers themselves, were being taken into account in the planning of professional development. If this was the Congress' intent, it seems largely to have been met, though at times without teachers' active participation in a planning process (through participation in formal planning committees).

It is also possible that, in addition to serving individual teachers' needs, the Congress intended that Eisenhower-assisted professional development serve *school* needs in the service of school-wide goals. If this was what the Congress intended, then our data suggest that districts could place more emphasis on school-level planning, and embedding professional development in the daily lives of teachers. Research on professional development suggests that meeting the needs of individual teachers and meeting school-wide needs are both important goals of professional development. The Department of Education and the Congress may want to consider how to make both of these goals clear in the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

## **DIFFERENCES IN MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF EISENHOWER-ASSISTED ACTIVITIES BY DISTRICT POVERTY AND SIZE**

Throughout this chapter we report differences in district management and operation according to the district's poverty level and the number of teachers in the district. A synthesis of these results indicates that there is more variation by district size than by poverty level. In general, however, large districts and high-poverty districts perform better on these measures than small districts and low-poverty districts.

Specifically, we find that, compared to low-poverty districts, high-poverty districts:

- ◆ co-fund more with NSF and ED programs, and
- ◆ employ more continuous improvement efforts.

We find that, compared to small districts, large districts:

- ◆ are more aligned with state and district standards and assessments,
- ◆ co-fund more with NSF and ED programs, and
- ◆ employ more continuous improvement efforts.

Consortia also co-fund and use continuous improvement efforts significantly more than smaller districts do. We also find that both large and small districts have significantly more school-level planning than consortia. Teacher participation in planning is the only element of implementation that does not vary significantly by either district poverty or district size.

These findings, taken together, suggest several conclusions. First, large districts may be more aligned, and, along with consortia, may co-fund more, and use more continuous improvement methods because they have a greater need to integrate professional development with other reforms. Large districts and consortia may have an increased need for organization and integration since they

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are more likely to have a large number of initiatives and reforms and more money from other federal programs, and because of the larger number of teachers that they serve. This, in turn, would also create the need for more systematic monitoring and evaluation of their professional development (and other reform) efforts. Another reason that they outperform smaller districts on these dimensions may be that larger districts and consortia are likely to have a better infrastructure for coordination among district-level staff who serve in professional development roles.

Similarly, high-poverty districts may co-fund more because they are more likely to have multiple programs operating that share a focus on targeting teachers of special populations of students. Similarly, districts with more students in poverty may conduct more continuous improvement efforts because they are likely to be receiving funds from federal programs that have requirements similar to Eisenhower's for the use of indicators, needs assessments, evaluation, and guidance.

The finding that school-level planning is less common in consortia than in either districts or schools may be because the main purpose of consortia is to foster across-district planning, rather than planning across schools or within individual schools. Single districts that do not have the added issue of across-district coordination may have more latitude to focus planning at the individual school level.

These results show that alignment, co-funding, continuous improvement, and teacher involvement in planning vary across districts. The next section informs our understanding of how these four factors affect the quality of professional development.

## **THE RELATIONSHIP OF DISTRICT MANAGEMENT TO FEATURES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In this chapter so far, we have described several aspects of the district management and operation of Eisenhower-assisted activities. In Chapter 4, we examined the characteristics of district portfolios of professional development. Here, we draw together our results in these two chapters by analyzing the extent to which district management practices are related to particular structural and core features of district Eisenhower professional development portfolios.

As described in Chapter 4, we developed measures of Eisenhower portfolio characteristics. Specifically, they are (1) the percent of the districts' Eisenhower participations in reform activities; (2) the average time span of the districts' activities, both reform and traditional; (3) the extent to which activities have collective participation—participation by whole schools or groups of teachers (e.g., all teachers from the same grade or department); (4) the number of opportunities for active learning offered in in-district workshops or institutes; and (5) the amount of emphasis the district places on targeting professional development activities to teachers of special populations of students (e.g., teachers from Title I schools).

In Chapter 4, we noted that these measures differ by district poverty and size. Here, we take this analysis of portfolio characteristics one step further by presenting a model that describes how the district's role in shaping, implementing, and planning professional development, described earlier in this chapter, is related to the structural and core features of the district's portfolio of activities.

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To analyze how the various components of the legislation—those addressing the district’s role in design, quality, implementation, and targeting of Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities—are associated with each other, we developed an explanatory model, shown in Exhibit 5.11. This model takes each major component of the legislation, as measured by variables constructed from our survey of Eisenhower coordinators and described in this chapter and Chapter 4, and examines its relationship to several other components.

The model is an implied logic model, in that we hypothesize a sequence of events. Specifically, as Exhibit 5.11 depicts, we assume that districts first build a vision of professional development through alignment and co-funding, then implement and monitor the vision through planning and continuous improvement efforts. These actions then result in particular features of the district portfolio of professional development, such as the percent of teachers in reform types, the average duration of activities, the degree of collective participation, opportunities for active learning, and the district’s targeting practices. It should be emphasized, however, that components of the system are likely interactive, and may occur simultaneously. For example, a reform-oriented district may practice superior vision-building and implementation, and design activities with more high-quality components and more targeting, all at the same time, because of the district’s orientation toward reform. Our data are not longitudinal, so we cannot test the causal ordering. We can, however, identify the strength of relationships among variables. We suggest a logic of events to help to explain how the process of designing and implementing district-provided development might work; but our model should not be considered to exclude the possibility of two-way effects or an alternative temporal ordering.

We use ordinary least squares regression (OLS) to analyze the paths (or associations) between variables. Only relationships that are significant at the .05 level are reported. Since contextual factors may influence the design and implementation of district portfolios, we have included several district characteristics as control variables in our model: district poverty level, consortium status, the log of the number of teachers,<sup>8</sup> the interaction of the log of the number of teachers and consortium status,<sup>9</sup> and cluster status. (For a detailed description of all of the variables in the model, see Appendix G.)

As Exhibit 5.11 shows, co-funding is the strongest predictor of the features of district portfolios of Eisenhower-assisted professional development. It is related directly to increased targeting ( $b=.17$ ),<sup>10</sup> a higher percent of teacher participations in reform types of professional development ( $b=.15$ ), and more collective participation ( $b=.14$ ), and it is *indirectly* related to more opportunities for active learning and increased targeting through its relationship to increased continuous improvement efforts ( $b=.16$ ) and more teacher participation in planning ( $b=.16$ ).

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<sup>8</sup> We expect that the same increase in district size has a smaller effect on implementation and outcome factors as size increases. For example, a 100 teacher increase in district size from 100 to 200 teachers would have more of an effect on implementation and outcome factors than a 100 teacher increase in district size from 1,000 to 1,100 teachers. Taking the log of district size allows measured changes in the dependent variable to be associated with proportional increases in the number of teachers in a district.

<sup>9</sup> The effect of size may differ for consortia and individual districts. Measuring the interaction of the log of district size and consortium status allows us to take this into account.

<sup>10</sup> B represents the standardized beta coefficient, or the standardized regression coefficient, which indicates the strength of the relationship between the two variables. For example, the beta of .17 for the relationship between co-funding and targeting means that for every one standard deviation increase in co-funding, there is a .17 standard deviation increase in targeting. The arrow from co-funding to targeting indicates that targeting was regressed on co-funding.

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Coordination in terms of working with schools and professional development providers proved unimportant in our model, but alignment is significantly related to implementation, and structural and core features of professional development. Alignment predicts more participations in reform types of professional development ( $b=.12$ ), which in turn is associated with a longer span ( $b=.40$ ), and also more continuous improvement ( $b=.16$ ). These results support the notion that building a vision of professional development through alignment, and having a critical mass of funds available, made possible through co-funding, are instrumental factors in fostering the provision of high-quality professional development activities. Further, having activities aligned with state and district standards and assessments may indicate that districts are providing guidance and using data for continuous improvement efforts.

Although this analysis demonstrates the importance of alignment and co-funding, which are emphasized in the Eisenhower legislation, we still do not know as much as we could about the extent to which districts practice alignment and co-funding, or the processes through which they engage in these practices. Developing a deeper understanding of how alignment and co-funding work would help us to understand their link to other implementation efforts, and ultimately, to the provision of high-quality professional development activities.

Continuous improvement is another variable that is associated with outcomes that are emphasized by the legislation, but whose actual operation remains unclear. Continuous improvement efforts, in terms of providing guidance, needs assessments, and evaluation, have a moderate association with both increased opportunities for active learning ( $b=.20$ ) and increased targeting ( $b=.17$ ). Our analyses of the sub-scales that comprise continuous improvement, reported earlier in this chapter, show several potentially important findings: 1) districts' use of indicators is not prevalent, and case studies suggest that for those that do use indicators, their use is somewhat perfunctory; 2) evaluative methods do not include linking professional development with teacher actions or student outcomes; and 3) many districts offer particular types of guidance and support to schools and professional development providers, but offer little guidance related to the use of data. This indicates that while districts play a role in guiding schools and professional development providers, districts may lack the capacity for sophisticated use of data in decision-making, planning, and evaluation.

In terms of planning, Exhibit 5.11 shows that district-level planning (as opposed to school-level planning) is related to activities of longer span ( $b=.11$ ), and teacher participation in planning is related to activities with more opportunities for active learning ( $b=.20$ ) and more targeting of teachers of special populations of students ( $b=.16$ ). These relationships support our findings reported earlier in this chapter. High-quality professional development can be planned at any level, and planning at the district level is not the same as implementation at the district level. As our case studies show, there are examples of both high-quality professional development planned at the district level and low-quality professional development planned at the school level. This reinforces the need to clarify the 80-20 rule, to determine Congress' intent in encouraging school-level planning and implementation of professional development activities.

## EXHIBIT 5.11

### Relationship of District Management to Features of Professional Development

#### Controls

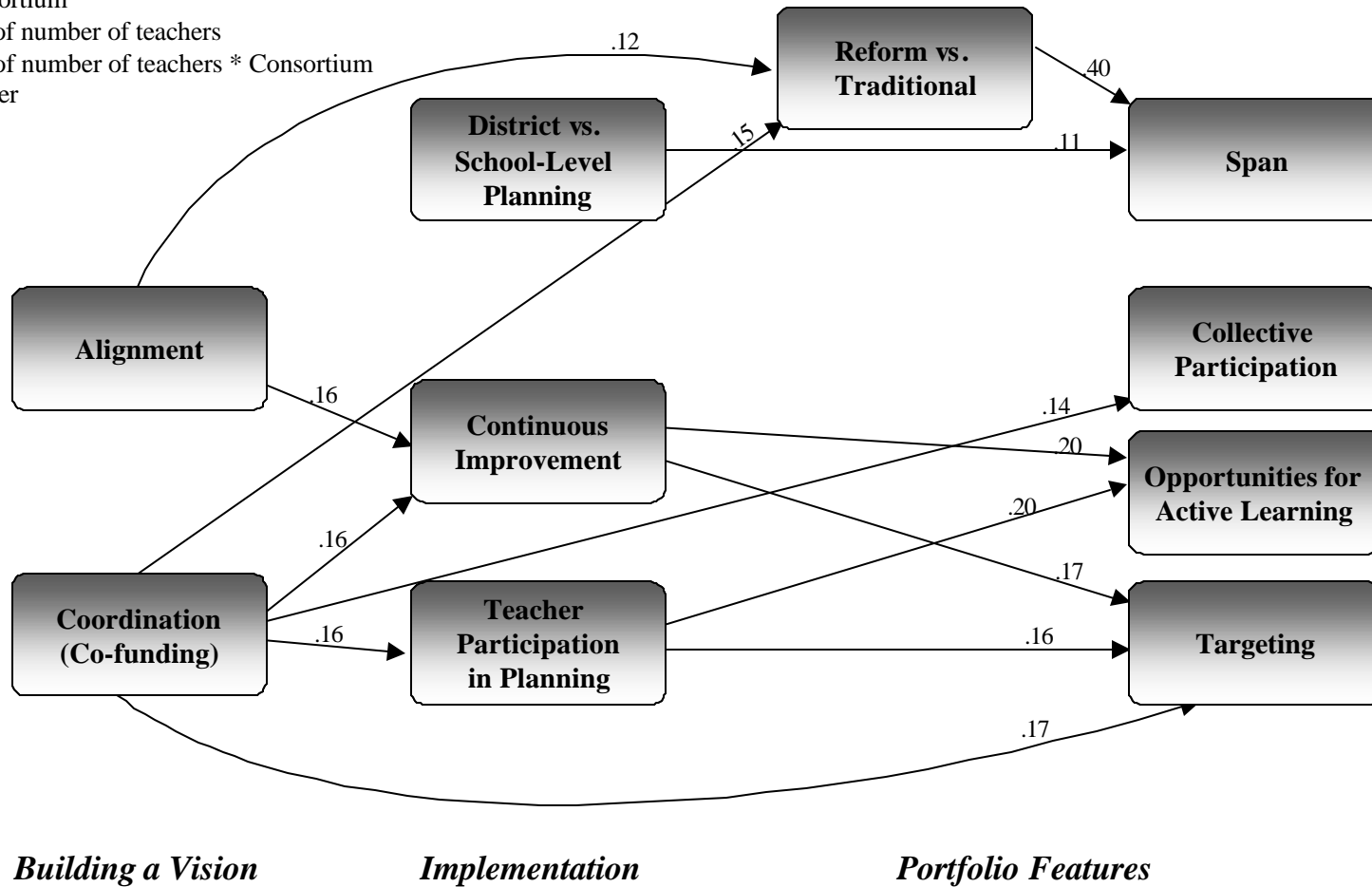
Poverty

Consortium

Log of number of teachers

Log of number of teachers \* Consortium

Cluster



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## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we described how districts manage and operate Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. We examined how districts build a vision for professional development through alignment and coordination, and how they implement that vision, through continuous improvement efforts and through planning at different levels with different types of teacher involvement. We also examined how these management practices and operations differ in districts of different poverty levels and sizes, and we present a model of how these practices shape the quality of Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. Several of the findings of these analyses have important implications for the Eisenhower Professional Development Program.

First, districts are much more likely to have their professional development aligned with standards than with assessments. This suggests that many districts may not yet have their assessments aligned with district and/or state standards. If one major goal of the Eisenhower legislation is to fit professional development into the framework of other reforms in the district, it may be that districts have considerable work to do to establish connections and alignment across standards and assessments before this is possible.

Second, we find that co-funding plays an important role in the implementation, management, structure, and core features of Eisenhower-assisted professional development. Our data show that co-funding most often occurs with other programs focused on mathematics and science, and that other types of coordination can be less substantive and meaningful in shaping professional development. This highlights the importance of having subject-area focus in common in order to promote co-funding. Also, gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in combining funding streams with other programs would help us focus on how this process results in districts being better able to provide professional development that meets the high standards of quality outlined in the provisions of the Eisenhower legislation.

Third, continuous improvement efforts are related to certain portfolio features, such as greater opportunities for active learning and targeting, but these efforts are relatively rare. Eisenhower coordinators are least likely to report using data-driven continuous improvement methods, such as applying indicators to professional development or linking teacher practices with student achievement to evaluate professional development activities. Perhaps more emphasis on these important and more rigorous methods of continuous improvement would increase the quality of these efforts, and as a result, improve the quality of the professional development activities that districts provide.

Lastly, our analyses of differences according to district poverty level and district size suggest that there are certain advantages that large districts have over small districts, and that high-poverty districts have over low-poverty districts, in shaping, planning, and implementing Eisenhower-assisted professional development activities. It is likely that the presence of more federal dollars, more staff (and thus more need to coordinate), and better infrastructure for communication and coordination all contribute to these differences. Learning more about the conditions that facilitate better implementation and planning in certain types of districts would help to identify possible added supports that some districts need; it may also suggest particular conditions or processes that could be established or required by the Eisenhower legislation in order to develop capacity in other districts.